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UNPATH'D WATERS

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ELDER CONKLIN, AND OTHER STORIES
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STORIES

JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD

UNPATH'D WATERS

BY

FRANK HARRIS

LONDON: JOHN LANE
THE BODLEY HEAD

MCMXIII

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TO ISIDORE DE LARA

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK IN MEMORY OF
OUR LONG FRIENDSHIP AND MY PROFOUND
ADMIRATION FOR HIS CHARACTER AND GENIUS.

FRANK HARRIS.

Nice, 1913.

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UNPATH'D WATERS

THE MIRACLE OF THE STIGMATA

THE MIRACLE OF THE STIGMATA

· · ·

IT was after the troubles in Jerusalem that a man called Joshua, a carpenter and smith, came to Cæsarea. Almost before the neighbours were aware of it, he had settled down in a little hut opposite the house of Simon the image-maker, and was working quietly at his trade. He was a Jew, to all appearances: a middle-aged Jew, with features sharpened by suffering, or possibly by illness, and yet in many ways he was not like a Jew: he never went near a synagogue, he never argued about religion or anything else, and he took what people gave him for his work without bargaining.

To his loud, high-coloured, grasping compatriots he seemed to be rather a poor creature; but a certain liking softened their contempt of him, for his shrinking self-effacement flattered vanity and disposed them in his favour. And yet, now and then, when they talked with most assurance and he lifted his eyes to them, they grew a little uneasy: his look was more one of

pity than of admiration. He was a queer fellow, they decided, and not easy to understand; but, as he was peculiarly retiring and silent, the less agreeable impression wore away, and they finally took the view of him that was most pleasing to themselves, and regarded him as unimportant.

Joshua seemed to accept their indifference with humble gratitude. He hardly ever left his room, and made no friends, except Simon, who modelled in clay and wax the little figures of the Phœnician gods. Simon had the name of a rich man and he was very clever; he used to paint some of his wax gods with rosy cheeks, black hair and gilded lips till they looked alive, and their robes were green and purple and saffron with dark shadows in the folds so that they seemed to move. Simon took a great liking to Joshua from the beginning, and did his best to break down his reserve and make an intimate of him. But even Simon had to content himself with moderate success. Joshua was always sympathetic, and would listen to him for hours at a time; but he spoke very little, and never about himself. Simon, however, used to maintain that Joshua's silence was more stimulating than the speech of other men.

Simon's wife, Tabitha, did not take to Joshua

at first; she never felt at ease with him, she said, and his great eyes made her flesh creep. But, as she got to know him, she could not help seeing his industry and his love of home and a quiet life, and, in a month or so, she sent to Joppa for her sister's daughter, Judith, who was twenty-five years old, and still unmarried. It was poverty, Tabitha knew, and not choice that had kept Judith single. The very first night after the girl reached Cæsarea the two had a long talk, and Judith drank in all her aunt had to tell of Joshua and his peculiarities, and accepted the cunning advice of the older woman with complete submission.

"The girl is no fool," Tabitha said to herself, and began to take a liking to her pupil; while Judith felt that Tabitha was really clever in managing men, or how could she have contrived to keep her husband's affection, in spite of her age and barrenness, a thing which seemed to the girl wonderful? Tabitha's advice to Judith was not to hold off and thus excite Joshua's desire; but to show him that she liked him.

"He has been disappointed in life," Tabitha said, "and wants comforting. Anyone can see he's soft and affectionate by nature, like a girl: he will be grateful to you for loving him. Trust me, I know the kind of man: there was Jonas when I was young; I might have had him ten

times over, if I had wanted to; and James as well, the rich tanner of Joppa who married the Levite's daughter. You take my advice, Judith, make up to him, and you'll get him. Joshua has a lot of the woman in him or I'm a fool."

Tabitha turned out to be right, though Judith did not succeed as quickly as they had expected, for it was hard to persuade Joshua that he was loved by anyone.

"I am old," he said, "and broken, and my house is empty of hope."

But the women were patient, and, one afternoon, Simon put in a warm word for Judith, and a little later the wedding took place.

The marriage was not unhappy; indeed, the union of the two seemed to grow intimate as time went on, and nothing occurred to trouble the peace of the household, except the fact that the marriage of Judith, too, was barren, like the marriage of Tabitha. Now and again Judith took this to heart and blamed her husband, but her anger never lasted very long. Joshua had a way of doing kind little things, even while he was being scolded, which was hard to resist. Still Judith always felt she would have thought more of him if he had turned on her and mastered her, as she had seen her father master her mother.

In the third year of the marriage, one Philip,

a deacon, came from Jerusalem, and created a good deal of excitement and curiosity in the Jewish community. He talked of miracles and a Messiah; but no one believed much in him. And, as soon as he had left the town, the effect of his words disappeared, as hot vapour disappears in air. A little later, another wandering preacher, called Peter, came to Cæsarea, and with his coming the new doctrine began to be understood. Peter taught that one Jesus had been born in Bethlehem from the seed of David, and that He was the Messiah foretold by the prophets. But when it became known that this supposed Messiah had been crucified in Jerusalem as a sedition-monger, the more devout among the Jews grew indignant, and Peter often found it difficult to get a hearing. Still, he was a man of such passionate conviction that his teaching lent the subject an interest which, strangely enough, did not die out or even greatly diminish after he had gone away. From time to time, too, curiosity was excited anew by all sorts of rumours; so when it was told about that another apostle, Paul, had landed at Cæsarea and was going to speak, the Jews ran together to hear him.

Judith had heard the news at Tabitha's. As soon as she had made arrangements to go to the place of meeting, she hurried across to her

own house to dress and to tell Joshua. Joshua listened to her patiently as usual, but with a troubled brow, and when his wife told him to get ready to accompany them, to her amazement he said that he could not go, and, when she pressed him and insisted, he shook his head. In the years they had lived together, he had hardly refused her anything, and he had never gone against her wishes at any time without explaining and pleading as if he were in fault; so Judith was doubly determined to get her own way now. After asking once more for his reasons, she declared that he must go with her:

“It’s seldom I ask you anything, and it is very dull here. You must come.”

It pained him to refuse her, and, seeing this, she talked about the wretched loneliness of her life, and, at last, wept aloud over her poverty and childlessness. Joshua comforted her and wiped her eyes, but did not yield, and, in this plight, Simon and Tabitha found them, much to Judith’s annoyance. Simon took in the position at once, and, in his good-humoured way, soon settled the difficulty.

“Come on, Judith,” he said; “you know you would not like him so much if he were not a stay-at-home, and it is not flattering to cry when you have me and Tabitha for company”;

and without further ado he took the women away with him.

When they returned that evening, Judith seemed like a new creature; her cheeks were red and her eyes glowed, and she was excited, as one is excited with the new wine. For hours she talked to Joshua about Paul and all he had said:

“He is the most wonderful man in the world,” she declared; “not big nor handsome; small, indeed, and ordinary-looking, but, as soon as he begins to speak, he seems to grow before your eyes. I never heard anyone talk as he talks: you cannot help believing him; he is like one inspired.”

So she went on, while Joshua, from time to time, raised his eyes to her in surprise. In spite of her excitement she answered his mute questioning:

“If you once heard him, you would have to believe him. He began by saying that he came to preach Christ and Him crucified. You know how everyone is ashamed to speak of the crucifixion. Paul began with it; it was the crowning proof, he said (what beautiful words!) that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. For Jesus was crucified, and lay three days in the grave, and then came to life again and was seen of many. This is the chief doctrine of the new

creed; we shall all have to die with Jesus to the things of the flesh, Paul says, in order to rise again with Him to everlasting life."

^ She spoke slowly, but with much feeling, and then, clasping her hands, she cried:

"Oh, it is true; I feel it is all true!"

"But did Jesus die?" Joshua asked. "I mean," he went on hesitatingly, "did Paul try to prove that?"

"No, indeed," replied Judith. "Everyone knows that a man is not crucified by the Romans and allowed to live."

"But Jesus was not a criminal to the Romans," Joshua remarked quietly; "perhaps they took less care in his case."

"Oh, that's foolish," Judith retorted. "Of course, he was dead; they don't bury men who are alive."

"But sometimes," Joshua went on, "men are thought to be dead who have only fainted. Jesus is said to have died on the Cross in a few hours; and that, you know, is very strange; the crucified generally live for two or three days."

"I've no patience with you!" cried Judith. "All your doubts come from your dislike of religion. If you had more piety, you would not go on like that; and, if you once heard Paul preach, you would know, you would feel in

your heart, that he was filled with the very Spirit of God. He talks of Jesus beautifully."

"Did he know Jesus?" asked Joshua. "He was not one of the disciples, was he?"

"Oh, no," she said. "He made himself famous by persecuting the followers of Jesus. For a long time, he went everywhere, informing against them and throwing them into prison. He told us all about it: it is a wonderful story. He was going up to Damascus once to persecute the Christians — that's what they are called now — when suddenly, in the road, a great light shone upon him, and he fell to the ground, while a voice from heaven cried:

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

"The voice was the voice of Jesus. Paul was blind for three days in Damascus, and only got his sight again through the prayers of one of the Christians. Isn't it all — beautiful?"

"It may have been the sun," said Joshua slowly, "the noonday sun; his blindness afterwards seems to show that it was sunstroke."

"But the voice," said Judith, "the voice which came from heaven, and which the others didn't hear, that wasn't sunstroke, I suppose?"

"The others didn't hear the voice," repeated Joshua, as if he were speaking to himself; "perhaps then it was the voice of his own soul, wounded by those persecutions."

"Oh, you're hateful," cried Judith, "with your stupid explanations. I can't see what pleasure you find in them, myself. Besides, they hurt me, for I believe in Paul. Yes, I do," she added passionately; "he is as God to me"; and, after a pause, she said:

"I'm going with Tabitha to-morrow to see Paul: I want to be baptised and to become a Christian, as Paul is."

Joshua shook his head and cast down his eyes in doubt and sorrow, but Judith turned from him: she had said what she wanted to say.

The next morning, Simon and Tabitha came over early, and they all talked of the effect of Paul's preaching: half the Jews in Cæsarea had been converted already, Judith said, and hundreds were going to be baptised at once. Tabitha confirmed this, and hoped that Simon, too, would follow the good example. Simon, however, said that, for his part, he meant to wait: he would hear more, and do nothing rashly; but he did not wonder that the women were persuaded, for Paul was very eloquent.

"He's ugly," he went on. ("Oh no!" cried Judith, "he's glorious!") "I think him very ugly," Simon persisted; "but his face gets hold of you: he's nearly bald, with a long beaked nose and thick black beard; but his eyes are wonderful; they blaze and grow soft

and weep and his voice changes with his eyes till your very soul is taken out of you. His teaching, too, is astonishing."

"You see," he continued, "Paul's idea that the kingdom promised to us Jews is to be a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness, and not a material kingdom, seems to me good. It is practicable at least, and that's something. And this Jesus of whom Paul preaches must have been an extraordinary being, greater than the prophets, greater even than Elias. He used to say, 'My kingdom is not of this world,' and he went about with the poor and the prostitutes and the afflicted. Did you ever happen to see him in Jerusalem?"

Joshua kept his eyes on the ground, and after a time replied in a low voice:

"He wasn't much in Jerusalem."

.

Day by day, the agitation spread and spread, like a pool in the rains, till it looked as if there were no limit to Paul's power of persuading the Jews. Conversion followed conversion; the meetings grew larger and larger, the interest in what he said more and more intense, till, at length, nearly all the Jews in Cæsarea had become followers of the Nazarene. The excitement caught in the other quarters of the city.

The Phœnician fishermen and some landsfolk began to come to the meetings, and, every now and then, some Roman soldiers, and here and there a centurion; but these more out of curiosity than emotion.

As Tabitha and Judith had been among the earliest converts, it was only natural that their zeal should grow when they found their example followed by the priests and Levites and other leaders of the people. It was natural, too, that Judith should continue to press Joshua to give the new doctrine at least a fair hearing, as Simon had done, to his soul's salvation, but Joshua remained obstinate. One evening, however, Judith's patience was rewarded. They were all talking at Simon's house, and, at length, Judith quoted some words of Paul on Charity:

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

As she paused, Joshua looked at her for a moment and then said, simply:

"I will go with you to-morrow to hear Paul."

And they were all glad, and gave thanks unto God.

On the morrow, when they drew near the meeting-place, they found themselves in a

great crowd of Jews, for the doors of the building had been closed by reason of the multitude. Everyone was talking about the new doctrine.

"I like Paul," said one, "because he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and aforetime a Pharisee."

"Ah!" cried another. "Do you remember that splendid thing he said yesterday, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink, for so thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.' Ha! ha! ha! 'Coals of fire'! That was great, eh?"

"And true, too!" exclaimed a friend.

"And new!" cried another.

And the men embraced each other, while their faces shone with conquering enthusiasm. Joshua plucked Simon by the garment:

"Do you hear?"

"Yes," said Simon impatiently, for the prevailing excitement was exciting him, and he didn't like the interruption; "of course, I hear."

Then a red Jew, with head of flame and beard of gold, started forward, and, uplifting his hand, cried:

"What I liked best in his last speech was what he said against backsliders and those who excite doubt by vain disputations; and, above all, that great word of the Messiah: 'He that

is not with me is against me, and he that gathered not with me, scattereth abroad.'"¹

The man thundered out the words as if he were defying the world.

Again Joshua plucked Simon by the garment, and, when Simon turned to him, he saw that the carpenter's face was pale, and tears stood in his eyes.

"What is it, Joshua?" he asked.

Joshua tried to speak, but could not for a moment, and, when at length he had drawn Simon a little apart, all that he was able to say was:

"Do you hear what they say?"

"Of course, I hear," said Simon crossly, for he had enjoyed the vivid, impassioned talk; "but what of that? What is the matter with you?"

And Joshua asked:

"Are these men true witnesses? Does Paul indeed teach these things?"

Simon answered shortly:

"Yes: I suppose so."

Joshua looked at him regretfully, and said:

"I must go, Simon; I could not listen to Paul. He does not speak as Jesus spoke; I must go."

But Simon was impatient.

¹ Matthew xii. 30.

"Nonsense," he cried; "what do you know of Jesus that you should contradict His apostle?"

And Joshua made answer:

"I know what Jesus taught; and this is not his teaching. I remember his very words once: 'He that is not against us is on our part.'¹ He always preached love, Simon; and this man — I must go!"

Simon shrugged his shoulders and threw out by way of warning:

"Judith will be very angry!"

But, at that moment, the doors were opened, and, as Joshua turned to go, he saw Simon carried away by the rush of the human tide that swept past and in a moment filled the building.

.

From that day on, Judith took no pains to hide her coolness toward her husband. And even to Simon, Joshua seemed unreasonable; he would not listen now to any talk about Paul; the mere mention of Paul's name seemed to pain and distress him; and, as Judith went oftener and oftener to Paul's preaching, the rift between her and her husband widened from day to day.

At last the disagreement came to speech.

¹ Mark ix. 40.

One afternoon, after sitting still for a long time watching her husband at work fashioning a cattle-yoke, Judith said:

“I want to speak to you; I must speak to you.”

Joshua leant on the tool he was using and paused to hear what she had to say, and she began:

“It is very hard for me to say it, but I must. You are the only Jew in Cæsarea who has hardened his heart and refused even to listen to the teaching of Jesus, and that has hurt me. Now Paul is going away, and — and — he asked us before he left to write down any question we wished to have answered; so that his absence might not be so much felt.”

She paused here, and seemed to grow a little confused, but, gathering courage, went on:

“I — I asked him something. I asked him,” and she lifted her eyes to her husband boldly, “I asked him whether it was right to live with an unbeliever, one who would not even listen to the truth or hear it; and he answered me —— ”

She paused, looking down, and Joshua gazed at her with wistful eyes, but said nothing, and at length she began again:

“He answered me yesterday, and I remember every word he said: ‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what

fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness ——”

She recited the words with a certain exaltation, and, as her voice rose defiantly over the last syllables, she looked up at her husband as if she expected to meet his anger; but she was mistaken. His eyes were full of unshed tears, and, resenting his want of spirit, she rang out:

“—— and what concord hath Christ with Belial?”

After a long pause, Joshua spoke:

“Can this indeed be Paul,” he asked, with a sort of sorrowful wonder, “who calls himself the follower of Jesus; yet denies his teaching?”

“‘Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,’ Paul says; but Jesus would have said, ‘Be ye unequally yoked together with unbelievers,’ for faith is stronger than doubt, as light is stronger than darkness.”

“Oh, no,” cried Judith, starting up; “it is not true. Paul says, ‘Be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you.’”

As she spoke, Joshua stretched out his hands to her beseechingly.

“Ah, Judith, that is not the teaching of love; and Jesus came into the world to teach love, and nothing else. Paul has made doctrines of

belief and rules of conduct; but Jesus wanted nothing but love: love that is more than righteousness. . . . He may have been mistaken," he went on in a voice broken by extreme emotion; "He trusted God, cried to Him in his extremity, hoping for instant help — in vain. . . . He was forsaken, cruelly forsaken, and all his life's work undone. But he was not wrong, surely, in preaching love to men — love that is the life of the soul."

He spoke with an impassioned tenderness; but Judith broke in, her eyes narrowing with question and suspicion:

"What do you know of Jesus and what He said? You never spoke to me about Him before. Did you know Him in Jerusalem?"

Joshua hesitated, and his eyes fell; then he said:

"I know his teaching," and he went on hurriedly: "But all this is only words, isn't it, Judith? Surely," and his voice trembled, "you would not leave me after all these years of happiness for what a stranger says?"

"What Paul says is always right," she retorted coolly.

Joshua stretched out his hands to her in hopeless appeal: "Ah, Judith, why give pain; why add to that mist of human tears that already veils the beauty of the world?"

Judith replied solemnly: "Paul says that we only come to peace by leaving the lower for the higher way; no earthly ties should fetter us who are called to the service of the divine Master: I shall find a nobler satisfaction in the new life."

As she spoke, Joshua's face grew drawn and pale, and in alarm she cried:

"What is it? Are you ill?"

"No," he replied, "I am not ill."

But he sat down and covered his face with his hands. After a while she touched him, and he looked up with unutterable sadness in his eyes.

"How can I blame you — how?" and he sighed deeply. "I, too, left my mother and my brethren, in obedience to what I thought was the higher bidding; but, oh, Judith, if I had my life to live over again, I don't think I should act in the same way. I must have hurt my mother, and it seems to me now that the higher love ought to include the lower and not exclude it. I should be more ——"

Again she interrupted him:

"Paul says hesitation is itself a fault; but I had no idea that you felt so much or cared for me so much."

Her tone was gentler, and he replied, with a brave attempt at smiling:

"I have had no life, Judith, so peaceful and happy as my life here with you."

Judith answered:

"You never say anything, so it is hard to believe you feel much."

This brought the talk to sympathy and intimacy, and, for a while, there was peace between them.

.

A little later, Paul held his last meeting. Before taking ship, he preached once in the open air, on the foreshore where water and land meet; and, of course, Judith was by his side. He spoke with heavy sadness of the parting, and with pride of those, his brothers and sisters, who would, he knew, remain faithful until the present coming of Christ. His words moved the people to tears and new resolutions; for they all sorrowed bitterly, fearing to lose him for ever. . . .

* The next day, when Joshua got up in the morning, Judith was nowhere to be found. He called her, but she did not answer; she was not in the house; he went across to Tabitha, and Tabitha could only tell him that Judith had resolved not to live with him any more and that she had gone back for a time to Joppa.

Joshua returned to his empty house and as

soon as he had closed the door his loneliness and misery came over him in a flood and he stretched forth his hands crying in bitterness of soul:

“But why this cup, oh, Lord? why?”

.

Months passed. Judith returned to Cæsarea and dwelt again with Tabitha; but, in spite of the reproaches of Simon, she refused to cross the road to see Joshua, and, as Joshua scarcely ever left his house, some time elapsed before they met. One morning, however, as Joshua was returning home from the market, Judith hurried out of Simon's house on her way to a meeting, and the two came face to face. They both stopped for a moment, and then Joshua, in divine pity and tenderness, forgiving everything, went toward his wife with outstretched hands; but Judith put her hands before her face, and turned her head aside, as if she didn't want to see him; and, when he still came towards her, she hastened back into the house without a word. After waiting a while in the road, Joshua went slowly into his house with downcast eyes. Neither of them then knew that they had seen each other in life for the last time.

.

After many days, Paul came again to Cæsarea, on his way to Jerusalem; and, once again, all Cæsarea thronged to hear the man whom everyone now recognised as the greatest of the apostles. As before, both Tabitha and Judith were diligent at the meetings, and Judith in especial was treated by Paul with great tenderness, as one who had suffered much for the faith.

One morning, Simon came in and told the women to go and see what had happened to Joshua; for he had not opened his door for two days, and was probably ill. The women went across and found Joshua. He had fallen by his bench, and was already cold; they could not lift him, and they came back to Simon, crying. Simon was angry with them, and said to Judith:

“He was too good for you, and so you left him. Paul says: ‘Our faithful Judith,’ and that’s enough for you. Pish!”

Simon was too rich, Judith felt, ever to be a good Christian; but this time she bore his rebuke, for she needed his assistance. Simon went over with them, and helped to lift Joshua and lay him out straight on his bed, and there he left him to the care of the women.

Tabitha and Judith got clean linen and began to wash the body. Suddenly, Tabitha cried out:

"Judith, look! What are these marks on his hands?"

And she turned the palm of the right hand to Judith, and the whole palm was drawn together to a puckered white cicatrix in the middle.

"Oh, that is nothing," Judith replied; "an accident that happened to him in Jerusalem."

Tabitha repeated:

"An accident? How strange!"

A moment later, she cried again:

"Judith! The same marks are in his feet."

Judith started.

"Feet?" And then: "I never knew that. They used not to be there, I am sure, or — oh!" she cried, as a new thought struck her, "perhaps they were covered by the sandal-strap; he never could walk far, you know."

As she spoke, staring and puzzled, Tabitha snatched the sheet from the body, and, pointing, said:

"Look! in his side as well," and then, in an awed whisper: "the Stigmata — the Holy Stigmata!"

Judith's lips framed the words, too, but she was unable to speak. When she came to herself, she said:

"Oh, Tabitha, let us go and tell Paul," and they hurried to the house where Paul dwelt, and, in a few words, told him the whole matter;

and at once Paul set off, with all those who were with him, to the house of Joshua.

When he had come to the house and had entered in, and had seen the marks on Joshua's hands and in his feet and in his side, Paul turned swiftly to those standing by, and, holding up his hands, cried:

"Lo, a great work has been wrought to-day in Israel!"

And all who were with him shouted:

"A miracle! A miracle!"

And Paul began to speak, and, while he spoke, the Jews in Cæsarea gathered about the house, and convinced themselves of the miracle that had been wrought on their behalf. And Paul went on preaching as one filled with the Spirit and with triumph in his voice, and soon the news spread to the port, and the Phœnician fishermen came and saw the wonder, and the Roman soldiers, and all listened now to Paul's words and were converted by him. For everyone knew that this Joshua, though a Jew, had not followed the new teaching, and that he had been as Paul said he was, the last unbeliever in Cæsarea, and because of his unbelief, as Paul declared, and for a sign to the whole world, the Stigmata of Jesus the Crucified had been put upon him, and, indeed, the Stigmata were there, plain to be seen by everyone, in his hands

and feet and side. And all the inhabitants of Cæsarea, and of the parts round about, were converted and turned to the Lord through the preaching of Paul, and through the miracle of the Stigmata that had been wrought on the body of the last unbeliever in Cæsarea.

THE HOLY MAN

THE HOLY MAN

(After Tolstoi)

∴

PAUL, the eldest son of Count Stroganoff, was only thirty-two when he was made a Bishop: he was the youngest dignitary in the Greek Church, yet his diocese was among the largest: it extended for hundreds of miles along the shore of the Caspian. Even as a youth Paul had astonished people by his sincerity and gentleness, and the honours paid to him seemed to increase his lovable qualities.

Shortly after his induction he set out to visit his whole diocese in order to learn the needs of the people. On this pastoral tour he took with him two older priests in the hope that he might profit by their experience. After many disappointments he was forced to admit that they could only be used as aids to memory, or as secretaries; for they could not even understand his passionate enthusiasm. The life of Christ was the model the young Bishop set before himself, and he took joy in whatever pain or fatigue his ideal involved. His two priests thought it unbecoming in a Bishop to

work so hard and to be so careless of "dignity and state," by which they meant ease and good living. At first they grumbled a good deal at the work, and with apparent reason, for, indeed, the Bishop forgot himself in his mission, and as the tour went on his body seemed to waste away in the fire of his zeal.

After he had come to the extreme southern point of his diocese he took ship and began to work his way north along the coast, in order to visit all the fishing villages.

One afternoon, after a hard morning's work, he was seated on deck resting. The little ship lay becalmed a long way from the shore, for the water was shallow and the breeze had died down in the heat of the day.

There had been rain-clouds over the land, but suddenly the sun came out hotly and the Bishop caught sight of some roofs glistening rosy-pink in the sunshine a long way off.

"What place is that?" he asked the Captain.

"Krasnavodsk, I think it is called," replied the Captain after some hesitation, "a little nest between the mountains and the sea; a hundred souls perhaps in all."

(Men are commonly called "souls" in Russia as they are called "hands" in England.)

"One hundred souls," repeated the Bishop, "shut away from the world; I must visit Krasnavodsk."

The priests shrugged their shoulders but said nothing; they knew it was no use objecting or complaining. But this time the Captain came to their aid.

"It's twenty-five versts away," he said, "and the sailors are done up. You'll be able to get in easily enough but coming out again against the sea-breeze will take hard rowing."

"To-morrow is Sunday," rejoined the Bishop, "and the sailors will be able to rest all day. Please, Captain, tell them to get out the boat. I wouldn't ask for myself," he added in a low voice.

The Captain understood; the boat was got out, and under her little lug-sail reached the shore in a couple of hours.

Lermontoff, the big helmsman, stepped at once into the shallow water, and carried the Bishop on his back up the beach, so that he shouldn't get wet. The two priests got to land as best they could.

At the first cottage the Bishop asked an old man, who was cutting sticks, where the church was.

"Church," repeated the peasant, "there isn't one."

"Haven't you any pope, any priest here?" enquired the Bishop.

"What's that?"

"Surely," replied the Bishop, "you have some one here who visits the dying and prays with them, some one who attends to the sick — women and children?"

"Oh, yes," cried the old man, straightening himself; "we have a holy man."

"Holy man?" repeated the Bishop, "who is he?"

"Oh, a good man, a saint," replied the old peasant, "he does everything for anyone in need."

"Is he a Christian?"

"I don't think so," the old man rejoined, shaking his head, "I've never heard that name."

"Do you pay him for his services?" asked the Bishop.

"No, no," was the reply, "he would not take anything."

"How does he live?" the Bishop probed further.

"Like the rest of us, he works in his little garden."

"Show me where he lives: will you?" said the Bishop gently, and at once the old man put down his axe and led the way among the scattered huts.

In a few moments they came to the cottage standing in a square of cabbages. It was just like the other cottages in the village, poverty-stricken and weather-worn, wearing its patches without thought of concealment.

The old man opened the door:

"Some visitors for you, Ivanushka," he said, standing aside to let the Bishop and his priests pass in.

The Bishop saw before him a broad, thin man of about sixty, dressed half like a peasant, half like a fisherman; he wore the usual sheepskin and high fisherman's boots. The only noticeable thing in his appearance was the way his silver hair and beard contrasted with the dark tan of his skin; his eyes were clear, blue and steady.

"Come in, Excellency," he said, "come in," and he hastily dusted a stool with his sleeve for the Bishop and placed it for him with a low bow.

• "Thank you," said the Bishop, taking the seat, "I am somewhat tired, and the rest will be grateful. But be seated, too," he added, for the "holy man" was standing before him bowed in an attitude of respectful attention. Without a word Ivan drew up a stool and sat down.

"I was surprised," the Bishop began, "to

find you have no church here, and no priest; the peasant who showed us the way did not even know what 'Christian' meant."

The holy man looked at him with his patient eyes, but said nothing, so the Bishop went on:

"You're a Christian: are you not?"

"I have not heard that name before," said the holy man.

The Bishop lifted his eyebrows in surprise.

"Why then do you attend to the poor and ailing in their need?" he argued; "why do you help them?"

The holy man looked at him for a moment, and then replied quietly:

"I was helped when I was young and needed it."

"But what religion have you?" asked the Bishop.

"Religion," the old man repeated, wonderingly, "what is religion?"

"We call ourselves Christians," the Bishop began, "because Jesus, the founder of our faith, was called Christ. Jesus was the Son of God, and came down from heaven with the Gospel of Good Tidings; He taught men that they were the children of God, and that God is love."

The face of the old man lighted up and he leaned forward eagerly:

"Tell me about Him, please."

The Bishop told him the story of Jesus, and when he came to the end the old man cried:

"What a beautiful story! I've never heard or imagined such a story."

"I intend," said the Bishop, "as soon as I get home again, to send you a priest, and he will establish a church here where you can worship God, and he will teach you the whole story of the suffering and death of the divine Master."

"That will be good of you," cried the old man, warmly, "we shall be very glad to welcome him."

The Bishop was touched by the evident sincerity of his listener.

"Before I go," he said, "and I shall have to go soon, because it will take us some hours to get out to the ship again, I should like to tell you the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples."

"I should like very much to hear it," the old man said quietly.

"Let us kneel down then," said the Bishop, "as a sign of reverence, and repeat it after me, for we are all brethren together in the love of the Master"; and saying this he knelt down, and the old man immediately knelt down beside him and clasped his hands as the Bishop clasped

his and repeated the sentences as they dropped from the Bishop's lips.

• "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name."

When the old man had repeated the words, the Bishop went on:

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

The fervour with which the old man recited the words "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" was really touching.

The Bishop continued:

"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,¹ as we forgive our debtors.

"Give . . . give ——," repeated the old man, having apparently forgotten the words.

"Give us this day our daily bread," repeated the Bishop, "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

"Give and forgive," said the old man at length. . . . "Give and forgive," and the Bishop seeing that his memory was weak took up the prayer again:

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Again the old man repeated the words with an

¹This form of the Lord's Prayer is evidently taken from Matthew.

astonishing fervour, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

And the Bishop concluded:

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

The old man's voice had an accent of loving and passionate sincerity as he said "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the beauty, for ever and ever. Amen."

The Bishop rose to his feet and his host followed his example, and when he held out his hand the old man clasped it in both his, saying:

"How can I ever thank you for telling me that beautiful story of Christ; how can I ever thank you enough for teaching me His prayer?"

As one in an ecstasy he repeated the words: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. . . ."

Touched by his reverent, heartfelt sincerity, the Bishop treated him with great kindness; he put his hand on his shoulder and said:

"As soon as I get back I will send you a priest, who will teach you more, much more than I have had time to teach you; he will indeed tell you all you want to know of our religion — the love by which we live, the hope in which we die." Before he could stop him the old man had bent his head and kissed the

Bishop's hand; and tears stood in his eyes as he did him reverence.

He accompanied the Bishop to the water's edge, and, seeing the Bishop hesitate on the brink waiting for the steersman to carry him to the boat, the "holy man" stooped and took the Bishop in his arms and strode with him through the water and put him gently on the cushioned seat in the sternsheets as if he had been a little child, much to the surprise of the Bishop and of Lermontoff, who said as if to himself:

"That fellow's as strong as a young man."

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For a long time after the boat had left the shore the old man stood on the beach waving his hands to the Bishop and his companions; but when they were well out to sea, on the second tack, he turned and went up to his cottage and disappeared from their sight.

A little later the Bishop, turning to his priests, said:

"What an interesting experience! What a wonderful old man! Didn't you notice how fervently he said the Lord's Prayer?"

"Yes," replied the younger priest indifferently, "he was trying to show off, I thought."

"No, no," cried the Bishop. "His sincerity

was manifest and his goodness too. Did you notice that he said 'give and forgive' instead of just repeating the words? And if you think of it, 'give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors' seems a little like a bargain. I'm not sure that the simple word 'give and forgive' is not better, more in the spirit of Jesus?"

The younger priest shrugged his shoulders as if the question had no interest for him.

"Perhaps that's what the old man meant?" questioned the Bishop after a pause.

But as neither of the priests answered him, he went on, as if thinking aloud:

"At the end again he used the word 'beauty' for 'glory.' I wonder was that unconscious? In any case an extraordinary man and good, I am sure, out of sheer kindness and sweetness of nature, as many men are good in Russia. No wonder our *moujiks* call it 'Holy Russia'; no wonder, when you can find men like that."

"They are as ignorant as pigs," cried the other priest, "not a soul in the village can either read or write: they are heathens, barbarians. They've never even heard of Christ and don't know what religion means."

The Bishop looked at him and said nothing; seemingly he preferred his own thoughts.

It was black night when they came to the ship, and at once they all went to their cabins to sleep; for the day had been very tiring.

The Bishop had been asleep perhaps a couple of hours when he was awakened by the younger priest shaking him and saying:

"Come on deck quickly, quickly, Excellency, something extraordinary's happening, a light on the sea and no one can make out what it is!"

"A light," exclaimed the Bishop, getting out of bed and beginning to draw on his clothes.

"Yes, a light on the water," repeated the priest; "but come quickly, please; the Captain sent me for you."

When the Bishop reached the deck, the Captain was standing with his night-glass to his eyes, looking over the waste of water to leeward, where, indeed, a light could be seen flickering close to the surface of the sea; it appeared to be a hundred yards or so away.

"What is it?" cried the Bishop, astonished by the fact that all the sailors had crowded round and were staring at the light.

"What is it?" repeated the Captain gruffly, for he was greatly moved; "it's a man with a grey beard; he has a lantern in his right hand, and he's walking on the water."

"But no one can walk on the water," said

the Bishop gently. "It would be a miracle," he added, in a tone of remonstrance.

"Miracle or not," retorted the Captain, taking the glass from his eyes, "that's what I see, and the man'll be here soon, for he's coming towards us. Look, you," and he handed the glass to one of the sailors as he spoke.

The light still went on swaying about as if indeed it were being carried in the hand of a man. The sailor had hardly put the night-glass to his eyes, when he cried out:

"That's what it is! — a man walking on the water . . . it's the 'holy man' who carried your Excellency on board the boat this afternoon."

"God help us!" cried the priests, crossing themselves.

"He'll be here in a moment or two," added the sailor, "he's coming quickly," and, indeed, almost at once the old man came to them from the water and stepped over the low bulwark on to the deck.

At this the priests went down on their knees, thinking it was some miracle, and the sailors, including the Captain, followed their example, leaving the Bishop standing awe-stricken and uncertain in their midst.

The "holy man" came forward, and, stretching out his hands, said:

"I'm afraid I've disturbed you, Excellency: but soon after you left me, I found I had forgotten part of that beautiful prayer, and I could not bear you to go away and think me careless of all you had taught me, and so I came to ask you to help my memory just once more. . . .

"I remember the first part of the prayer and the last words as if I had been hearing it all my life and knew it in my soul, but the middle has escaped me. . . .

"I remember 'Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' and then all I can remember is, 'Give and forgive,' and the end, 'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the beauty for ever and ever. Amen.'

"But I've forgotten some words in the middle: won't you tell me the middle again?"

"How did you come to us?" asked the Bishop in awed wonderment. "How did you walk on the water?"

"Oh, that's easy," replied the old man, "anyone can do that; whatever you love and trust in this world loves you in return. We love the water that makes everything pure and sweet for us, and is never tired of cleansing, and the

water loves us in return; anyone can walk on it; but won't you teach me that beautiful prayer, the prayer Jesus taught His disciples?"

The Bishop shook his head, and in a low voice, as if to himself, said:

"I don't think I can teach you anything about Jesus the Christ. You know a great deal already. I only wish ——"

London, Christmas, 1911-12

THE KING OF THE JEWS

THE KING OF THE JEWS

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THE PERSONS

HUSHIM. *A woman of the tribe of Benjamin; wife of Simon and mother of his two sons, Alexander and Rufus.*

SIMON. *Of Cyrene, who owns a field in the country outside Jerusalem, on the way to Bethel.*

The Scene Jerusalem :

Time: The First Hour on the day of Preparation.

HUSHIM. Now you know what to do, don't you? You must go to the Temple by the second hour and wait for Joad. When he comes he'll take you to the High Priest. You'll know Joad, he'll be dressed as a priest. Tell Joad he's the handsomest man you've ever seen; he's small, you know, and likes to think he's captivating. Compliment the High Priest on his sense of justice; say it is the finest in the world; say anything. . . . Don't be afraid of overdoing it; men love flattery.

SIMON [*nods his head*]. I'll do my best.

• HUSHIM. If I've not heard from you by the fourth hour I'll send Alexander to you to know the result, for I shall be very anxious. And the boy'll find out, he's so sharp. Don't spare compliments. You must be doorkeeper in the Temple, and flattery is like honey, the less you deserve it, the more you like it.

SIMON [*going*]. I'll try to do what you say, Hushim.

The Eleventh Hour on the day of Preparation

HUSHIM. Well? Have you got the post? You have been a time. Are you the doorkeeper of the Temple; have we the house in the Inner Court?

SIMON [*passing his hand over his forehead*]. I don't know.

HUSHIM. Don't know; you must know. Was Joad there? He promised to speak for you. Did you see him?

SIMON. I didn't see him. [*Sits down wearily*].

HUSHIM. Didn't see him! Wasn't he there? My uncle's brother, too, and he promised me: the liar. What did you do?

SIMON. I did nothing. I'm tired, Hushim.

HUSHIM. Tired! What's happened? Why don't you speak? What's the matter with you? Are you dumb or ill?

SIMON. I'm not ill, I'm only tired.

HUSHIM. Tired, you great hulk. Where have you been? What have you been doing? What's the matter with you? Can't you speak?

SIMON. If you knew ——

HUSHIM. If I knew what? Oh, you make me mad. What is it? [*She takes him by the shoulder and shakes him.*] What's happened? Oh, you brute! Can't you speak?

SIMON. You've no cause for anger, wife.

HUSHIM. No cause! Have you got the place? What did the High Priest say? You must know that.

SIMON. I don't know.

HUSHIM. You don't know. You must be mad. This comes of marrying a foreigner, a fool, a great brute. They all said I'd repent it. Oh! Oh! Oh!

SIMON. Don't cry, Hushim. I'll tell you everything.

HUSHIM [*drying her eyes*]. Tell me, did they make you doorkeeper? That's what I want to know. Tell me that. You promised you'd be in the Temple at the second hour and here it is the eleventh. Where have you been all day? Where?

SIMON. I'm sorry, wife; I forgot.

HUSHIM. Forgot, sorry! What do you mean? Joad promised me to get you the place if the

High Priest liked you. Did you get it? What did they say? Talk, man.

SIMON. I'm so sorry. I forgot all about it. I have not been to the Temple.

HUSHIM. You've not been to the Temple. And why not? Where were you? Don't say that Eli got the post. Don't say it or I'll strike you.

SIMON. I'm very sorry. I forgot. I don't know who got it. I wasn't there.

HUSHIM [*sitting down*]. Oh! Oh! Oh! He wasn't there! Oh! Oh! Oh! Where have you been all these hours? What have you been doing? Where did you go? Where did you eat?

SIMON. I've not eaten. I've —

HUSHIM. Not eaten! Why not? What happened? Oh, why won't you speak! Talk, tell me!

SIMON. I'll tell you everything; but I'm very tired.

HUSHIM. Tell me first, who got the post? You must have heard.

SIMON. I don't know. I've not heard.

HUSHIM. At the fourth hour I sent Alexander to the Temple to find out whether you were chosen or not; when it got so dark I sent Rufus to my sister-in-law, Hoshed. I could not bear the suspense. They've both come

back without news. You must know who got the post.

SIMON. No, I don't know. I didn't ask, but ——

HUSHIM. You didn't ask?

SIMON. I'm thirsty.

HUSHIM [*giving him wine*]. There! Now tell me everything. You went out to the field?

SIMON [*nods while drinking the wine*]. I was at the field till nearly the second hour working, then I came into the city. When I reached the street which leads from the Temple to Golgotha I could not get across it, there was such a crowd. They had all come to see some prisoners who were going to be crucified.

HUSHIM. But didn't you push through?

SIMON. I got through to the first file, but there soldiers kept the passage. I had to wait. No one was allowed to cross. . . . They told me there were three criminals. The people were talking about them. Two were thieves and one a rebel from the north, who had tried to make himself king. It was to see him the people had run together. Some said he was a prophet of God. . . .

After a little while the prisoners came by. The two thieves first, and then slowly the man, whom they called a prophet. He looked very ill. . . . [*After a long pause.*] They had

platted a crown of thorns and pushed it down on his head, and the thorns had torn the flesh and the blood ran down his face. When he came opposite to me he fell and lay like a dead man; the Cross was heavy. . . . The Centurion ordered some of the Roman soldiers to lift the Cross from him and he got up. He seemed very weak and faint: he could hardly stand. . . . The Centurion came across to me and pulled me out, and pointed to the Cross and told me to shoulder it and get on. . . .

HUSHIM. But why *you*?

SIMON. I suppose because I looked big and strong.

HUSHIM. Didn't you tell him you had to be at the Temple?

SIMON. Of course I told him, but he thrust me forward and warned me if I didn't do as I was told, I'd have to go the Temple without feet.

HUSHIM. Oh, what bad luck! No one ever had such bad luck as you. No one. Why didn't you run away?

SIMON. I didn't think —

HUSHIM. Well, you carried the Cross? And then —

SIMON. I went to lift the Cross; it seemed as if I were helping to punish the man. While I stood hesitating, he looked at me, Hushim.

I never saw such eyes or such a look. Somehow or other I knew he wished me to do it. I lifted the Cross up and got my shoulder under it and walked on. I did not seem to notice the weight of it, I was thinking of his look, and so we went through the crowd past Golgotha to the Hill of Calvary. On the top I put down the Cross.

HUSHIM. When was that? It must have been about the third hour. Why didn't you go to the Temple then? You see, it was all your fault. I knew it was! But go on, go on.

SIMON. I forgot all about the Temple, I could think of nothing but the man. He stood there so quiet while the priests and people jeered at him. . . . When the others were hung up, they shrieked and screamed and cursed. It was dreadful. . . .

When they were getting ready to nail him to the Cross I went over to him and said, "O Master," and he turned to me, "forgive me, Master, for doing what your enemies wished." And he looked at me again, and my heart turned to water, and the tears streamed from my eyes, I don't know why. . . .

He put his hands on my shoulders and said, "Friend, friend, there is nothing to forgive. . ." [*Lays his head on his arms and sobs—*]

HUSHIM. Don't cry, Simon, don't cry. He must have been a prophet!

SIMON. If you had seen him. If you had seen his eyes. . . .

HUSHIM [*beginning to cry*]. I know, I know. What else did he say?

SIMON. He thanked me, and though I was a foreigner and a stranger to him, and quite rough and common, he took me in his arms and kissed me. . . . I was all broken before him. . . .

He was wonderful. When they nailed him to the Cross he did not even groan — not a sound. And when they lifted the Cross up — the worst torture of all — he just grew white, white. . . . All the priests about and the people mocked him and asked if he could save others why couldn't he save himself? But he answered not a word. . . . I could have killed them, the brutes! He prayed to God to forgive them, and he comforted one of the thieves who was sobbing in pain. . . .

Oh, he was wonderful. Even in his anguish he could think of others, and yet he was the weakest of all. . . .

And then the storm burst, and I stood there for hours and hours in the darkness. I could not leave him, I waited. . . . Later some of his own people came about the Cross, weeping,

his mother and his followers, and took him down, and they called him Master and Lord, as I had called him. They all loved him. No one could help loving him, no one. . . .

Above his head on the Cross, they had written, "King of the Jews." You Jews have no king, I know; they did it to mock him. But he was a king, king of the hearts of men.

HUSHIM. And with all that we've lost the place! What was his name?

SIMON. Jesus of Nazareth.

HUSHIM. What was it he said to you? I want to remember it to tell Hoshed.

SIMON. He called me "Blessed, for that I a stranger, who did not even know him, was the only man in the world who had ever helped to bear his burden."

THE IRONY OF CHANCE

THE IRONY OF CHANCE

(After O. W.)

· · ·

MORTIMER was always rather peculiar. He and I were at Winchester together and about the same age; we took our removes regularly and so saw a good deal of each other. He was unlike other boys — strangely proud and sensitive. I remember the occasion when his curious temperament first came to notice and gave his life a bias. He was very quick at mathematics and things generally, but he had a poor memory for words and wrote shocking verses. One day — we had just got into the Lower Fifth, I remember, and were doing some hexameters — the Form master spoke to him contemptuously. Mortimer flushed and frowned, and, as the master ceased, closed his book sharply and never opened it again. He would not be schooled any longer, he said, by an ill-bred bully, and from that day on he did no more Form work.

As he never went in much for games, the

time soon hung heavy on his hands, and, to my surprise, he began to take up chemistry and was always in and out of the laboratory. Our science master at Winchester was a red-headed Irishman, called Moriarty, lusty and strong to all appearance; but of the most nervous and timid disposition. Inordinately proud of having secured a willing student, he humoured Mortimer a good deal, and the two became inseparable. As I soon passed into the Upper Fifth and then into the Sixth, I met Mortimer only at intervals. But our friendship continued; for, with all his pride, he was gentle and affectionate, and I always liked him greatly: I hardly know why. He was nice-looking in his own way: a clean, mouse-coloured English boy, with appealing gray eyes.

In October, 1882, I went to Balliol, and Mortimer came up to Oxford in the following May. My two terms' seniority, the demands of the river on my leisure, and the fact that I was reading for Honour Mods. and afterwards for Greats and a Fellowship, while he stuck to his chemistry, prevented me from seeing much of him. Later, too, he kept a good deal to himself and went in for abstruse, visionary studies: interesting, if you like, but vague and unprofitable. Yet I envied him the money

which made it possible for him to follow his bent and read what he liked: liberty is always seductive to the young. But, though we fell apart, whenever we did meet, the old liking showed itself as strong as ever. Sometimes he would look me up and have a talk. Now and again he spoke of his ambitions, or rather, of his hopes: when you come to deal with the mysteries, hopes are as much as you can have. One day he fairly startled me. I had been talking to him of my work, and had mentioned, casually, a Greek manuscript, recently discovered, of part of the *Bacchæ*, a palimpsest, when I noticed that Mortimer was gazing into space as if he were not listening. I shut up rather huffed; but he turned to me at once, in his charming, eager way, and begged me not to be offended.

“Your mention of a palimpsest,” he said, “led me to think of what the scientific equivalent of a palimpsest would be, and I came on rather an interesting idea. Suppose strong sunshine beating on a rock. Every shadow of man or beast cast on the rock modifies the sun’s influence, and so leaves an imprint, however faint, on the stone. Fancy if, in time to come, we were able to read such a palimpsest, and print off for you photographs of Plato and Sophocles from some rock on Colonus.

Wait a little, my friend, science will yet decipher palimpsests a great deal more interesting than your sheepskin puzzles."

The idea was curious, and Mortimer was in earnest, I saw; but, of course, the thing was impossible.

In due time, I took my First, and afterwards was lucky enough to get a Fellowship at All Souls. Then I came to London, and was called to the Bar. I lost sight of Mortimer completely, and for years scarcely heard of him. I knew, however, in a vague way, that he had gone down to his people in Wales, and had been a great disappointment to them. He would not enter any of the professions, nor marry, nor take on himself any of the accepted and usual burdens of life. He grew more and more solitary, and at last went and built a cottage and laboratory on the coast of Cardigan Bay, with money left to him by his mother, and there spent some of the best years of his life, more like a hermit than a reasonable human being.

Years passed: I had just taken silk, indeed, when I heard of Mortimer again. He was lecturing in London and the provinces, and scraps of his talk came to me from time to time, filtered through the daily papers. One or two phrases that had escaped the mangling of the reporters interested me:

"Laws of nature and ideas in the mind are correlatives, and suppose each other as eyes suppose light."

Again:

"Spiritual forces are only mechanical forces raised to a higher power, and will yet be found more efficient — even in industries."

These, and other such cryptic utterances, rather attracted me.

People thought Mortimer a little mad; he pretended to be able to work miracles, they said, and told wild stories about him which I had neither the time nor the inclination to investigate. Mortimer was the last person in the world, I thought, to play thaumaturge or to try to impose on anyone. I was dumbfounded when the news came of the scandal at Birmingham. Mortimer accused of cheating and swindling! Impossible! In my indignation I tore up the paper that held the news, and pitched it out of the brougham window. I was on my way down to chambers when I read the account. That very afternoon Mortimer came into my office.

He had changed greatly. The light-brown hair was gray; the slight figure had lost its spring; the hands twined nervously; the patient, appealing eyes even seemed to have lost their candour.

"Can I have a talk with you?" he asked, as our hands met.

"Surely," I replied. "I am glad you came to me."

He threw himself into my armchair with a sigh, and ran his hands through his hair; then suddenly jumped up in the old abrupt way.

"Pack them all off," he said, speaking quickly, "your clerk and everybody, and let us have a talk. I want your judgment of me and no one else's."

He was so nervous and excited that I humoured him. I gave my clerk three or four messages for solicitors and sent him away, and then went outside and "sporting my oak." I was surprised at myself. In spite of all I had to do, and a dozen engagements, I was as eager as a girl to hear Mortimer's story. When I came back to him, I filled my pipe, drew up another chair, crossed my legs on it, and said:

"Fire away! the court is with you."

He seemed to find it hard to begin. He took out his handkerchief and drew it backwards and forwards through his nervous fingers, a gesture I remembered from the old days at Winchester. At length, with a troubled sort of face:

"I must go back to the beginning," he said,

half defiantly, half apologetically. I nodded encouragement, and he went on:

"You know I worked at science at Winchester. I did a good deal there with Moriarty; he was a painstaking teacher, and I got a fair idea of inorganic chemistry from him. At Oxford I did a lot of gas analysis and some physics; and then I went to Heidelberg and spent four or five years with Bunsen in his laboratory."

"Did you really?" I broke in, wondering how he had found the time. "It must have been interesting."

• "More than interesting," he rejoined. "Bunsen, you know, was the man who discovered the spectroscope. Curious, wasn't it? About 1850, Comte declared that there were two things which would never be found out as long as the world lasted; two secrets of which the keys would never be entrusted to man: one was the origin of life, and the other, the chemical composition of the stars. Within ten years of the day he made the prediction, Bunsen used the spectroscope and showed the chemical composition of the stars. I was two years with Bunsen as an assistant: he paid me for the last year and a half; so I suppose I was of some use to him. I could not persuade him, the last of the great analysts, that the

day of synthetic chemistry had come; but I was assured of it myself, and, when I went down to Wales and started a chemical laboratory, it was in order to practise synthetic chemistry, and not analytic. My family was bothering me to settle down, as they called it; but I had other things to do: more important things, I thought. That problem of the origin of life was always in my head: a sort of tantalizing mirage, and I had ideas that seemed to lead to it — fascinating glimpses of the light. Plato talks about the unity and universality of life; but Plato had no idea that plants are as much alive as men and women. Long before I had read any botany, I knew that there must be plants which lived by eating: plants which could nourish themselves on meat and insects; plants which could move from place to place; plants in which the sap pulsed like blood: one life, one law, one plan, throughout creation. And, just as there is no gap between vegetable and animal life, so there is no gap between organic and inorganic existence; the being of stones and gases and metals must be subject to the same law, swayed by the same force, moving to the same end; a thought in the mind of man is a law in the furthest star."

He paused for a while, and when he began again it was with a half-humorous smile:

"Curious, isn't it, Jack? Knowledge used to bring scepticism; to-day it brings belief. Modern scientists have found that 'vibrations pass through space which cannot be propagated by matter.' They have therefore had to invent ether; the materialists themselves compelled to give matter a companion soul — extraordinary discovery, eh? But, long before this undefined 'ether' was invented, I had made matter and spirit my starting points. . . .

"How much I did, I don't know, I don't intend to talk about it; I want to come to the heart of the matter. I made some curious discoveries: I found very soon that one can fuse and mix bodies without regard for their different atomic weights. You understand, don't you?"

"No," I answered, shaking my head; "I have no scientific knowledge at all."

"Well," he said, "let me make it as simple as possible: oxygen has a certain atomic weight and hydrogen also, and, in order to mix them, you must put two volumes of hydrogen with one volume of oxygen. You see, the greater and the meaner do not unite easily in gases any more than in human beings."

I looked at him in amazement, but he went on quite seriously, with his head propped on his hand:

"And if the gases refuse to mix, you heat them, or pass an electric spark through them, and they unite at once — an electric spark," he repeated; "we call it love: don't we?" he added.

'After a pause, he began again, almost as if he were lecturing, I thought:

"So-called inanimate bodies will unite for all sorts of reasons, or, if you like the scientific jargon better, they will unite under various conditions: for instance, put gold and lead together at a certain temperature — say, 18 degrees Celsius — and you will find that the gold will slowly interpenetrate the lead, and in time make one with it. This simply means that the atoms of both metals are in a constant state of motion or vibration: there is no such thing in nature as stillness or death."

He broke off and turned to me abruptly:

"You remember a story in the Bible how a woman touched the hem of Jesus' garment and he turned round to see who it was, for he felt that virtue had gone out of him. I always knew that was true, literally true. . . . Well, just as electricity helps us to mix gases, so I found that electricity helped me to fuse metals and mix them, and, when I had no electricity, I could mix them by personal magnetism, if virtue sufficient were in me.

Again you shrug your shoulders and don't believe me: I suppose you are right not to; but it is true, nevertheless.

"At length, I resolved to do something that would convince you sceptics, and I set to work with a sort of moral idea before me. If I can prove this unity and universality of life, I said to myself, surely men will grow more pitiful and more kindly to all forms of being; more gentle, too, in humility of kinship. Even now we are careful of horses and dogs, birds and flowers that subserve our pleasures; but very cruel to animals and snakes and insects that can hurt us, and utterly heedless of stones and metals which seem to us without sensation. I hoped to make a larger sympathy potent and effectual."

"But you don't really believe," I interrupted, "that stones and metals can feel? You might almost as well say that they can think."

"Have you ever considered," Mortimer replied, "why it is that you can pass quickly over thin ice which would break if you stood still upon it? No: eh? Well, it is simply because ice wishes to remain ice: tries to resist strain. You show disbelief in your face," he cried; "but will you believe Haeckel, of Jena, perhaps the first scientific authority in

the world? Here are his words: 'Matter and ether are not dead, and moved only by extrinsic force; they are endowed with sensation and will; they experience an inclination for condensation, a dislike for strain.' Now are you satisfied? The life of stones and metals may be simpler than your life: they may have fewer sensations than you, but they also live, if motion and feeling and will are proofs of life. It was this truth that I divined and resolved to establish. I sought a proof simple and sufficient beyond denial or doubt.

"I determined to fuse metals together in such a way that they would do my bidding: that the mass would come when I asked it to come, go when I told it to go, stand still when I bade it stand still, and so prove that the spirit of man is that of God, and rules throughout creation."

He looked up suddenly; but I was listening enthralled: his enthusiasm had infected me. He continued:

"I went to work to fuse my metals, and first of all I fused three metals, I don't know why; mere superstition, I'm afraid; though I have found that most superstitions are fragments of forgotten knowledge; and then I fused nine metals, because, as you know, the figure nine shows curious properties in multiplication and

division. Still I failed absolutely. At length, I fused seven metals into a great ball, probably because seven was a sacred number in the past, but there it would take too long to tell you about my experiments, particularly as it was chance which put me on the right track after all. One morning I found my ball, wobbling and imperfect indeed, instead of the perfect sphere I had hoped for, but still a ball. At first I was almost in despair, and then — puzzled. The colour of the thing was superb: it had the play and light on it of steel, and the glow of gold, and was beautiful exceedingly. But it was not round. While I looked at it, Jack,” and, as Mortimer spoke, he put his hand on mine, “the truth came to me in a flash: of a sudden I saw that it was the shape of the earth, the sphere flattened at both Poles, and bulged at the Equator, a perfect model of our earth. Jack,” and he sprang to his feet, “the laws that made the world had made my sphere, and, in my exultation, I knew I had succeeded,” and he began to pace up and down the office, “for I called the ball, and it rolled and wobbled towards me, and I sent it away, and it rolled away, and I told it to stop, and it stood still: I was as God.

“All this,” he said, as he came back to the chair again after a long pause, “may have little

interest for you, but it drove me nearly mad: for the curious part of the matter is that, though I went to sleep that night with the magic ball by my bedside, exultant and content, and awoke refreshed and happy; yet in the morning I had lost my power. It was heart-breaking: I spoke to the ball, and it did not respond; and after the one gorgeous moment of power and accomplishment, I had weeks of dull disappointment and failure and doubt — yes, doubt: for, in time, I even came to doubt whether my success had not been a hallucination, a deception of fevered senses. At length, I put the ball out of mind, and took up some other work; and suddenly, one day, I perceived that I had regained my power over the ball, and could make it do whatever I wanted, and as proof to myself, I called it up the stairs after me, and then out upon the beach — I could have knelt and kissed the mark it left on the powdery sand.

“Months passed, and years, and I got no further. Sometimes for days I had control of the ball, and then of a sudden the power would leave me, and I was plunged into hell. It seemed to me often as if the fault were not in me, but in the ball itself. That makes you start,” he cried; “but think: how did the ball hear without ears, and move without force?

Surely, it must have had mind and will; at any rate, that's my belief. But whether the fault was in me or in the ball, the result was the same. For weeks despair would lie on me, crushing me; and then a change would come, and I was master again, and king. One thing upheld me: it seemed to me that, gradually, I was getting more and more control over my strange companion; the periods in which the ball disobeyed me grew shorter and shorter, and my mastery over it became more and more complete.

"But the imperfect tortured me, and the alternations of hope and fear broke down my health. I got nervous and fanciful; and, in my loneliness, weaker and weaker. I found out then, Jack, that, just as there is no limit between what is possible and what is impossible, so there is no line between sanity and insanity. Curious, isn't it? As soon as we think of our bodies, we are unwell; and as soon as we think of our minds we are on the verge of madness. I grew afraid of myself, and determined to change my mode of life. Besides, I had become very weak, and did not dare to wait any longer, lest my secret should perish with me. True, my discoveries were not so important as I had once hoped they would be; but it was better, I reflected, to

tell a little than to let all be lost: for there were myriads of generations coming after me who would do that which I had failed to do, and bring to fulfilment that which I had only begun. With this thought in my head, I came up to London and began to lecture. The change did my health good, and I got to love the work: though, of course, it was elementary. I delighted to show by a hundred analogies that the laws of physics were laws of thought; that there is a positive and negative in the electric current corresponding to the sex-division in man and woman; that our notion of expediency is the law of least resistance; and that the passion of love is the law of gravitation, and moves stars and suns as easily as boys and girls.

“And when I told them from the platform that I would give them a proof of all this, and described to them how I had fused and mixed the seven metals, and how, after many disappointments, the great ball had taken the shape of the earth, and how it would hear and obey me, come to me when I told it to come, go away when I told it to go away, and stand still at my command, people believed me who would not otherwise have believed my teaching, nor even have cared to listen to it. Like children, they were pleased with the puzzle, and

nothing more. The secret of life which I had discovered hardly interested them, and the mysterious kinship of man, not only with the other animals, but with that world of inorganic elements which seems to our dull senses motionless and dead, left them utterly indifferent. It was the miracle, Jack, which they had come out to see.

“One night, I was tired, and the ball responded badly, scarcely moved at all, in fact, and the people laughed and hooted, and some wanted their money returned. They sickened me with disappointment, and, afterwards, that impression grew upon me, and, the more I thought of it, the more frightened I became. You can understand, can’t you? The whole of my teaching endangered, because the visible proof was not always with me. The dull generation that wanted a sign was not easily satisfied.”

As he spoke, he rose, and paced up and down the office. When he began again, he spoke slowly and with long pauses, as if he were tired:

“And so, Jack, temptation came to me. It was a story of Edgar Allan Poe that gave me the idea. I cut an opening in the ball, and got a little boy who could enter it and move it as he liked from the inside. It took me only a week or so to construct the mechanism. You

disapprove, I see," he said, turning to me. "But, think; after all, it was only making certain what was usual and ordinary.

"Besides, I hardly ever employed the boy — my word of honour — he was not necessary. His mere presence gave me confidence, and I went on for weeks successfully. I lectured here in London and then in Leeds and Liverpool and all through Scotland, without using the boy at all.

"It was at Manchester, on my return South, that I first noticed a man in the audience: a man with an evil face. He sat there sneering disbelief at me while I talked. I could see envy and hatred in his eyes, and I grew afraid of him. His influence was evil, and my second night at Manchester I put Walter in the ball: I had lost confidence. . . . Evil affects us even when we resist it; sometimes I think it affects us more when we resist it than when we yield to it. . . . From that day on, I used the boy occasionally; for the evil face followed me all over the country, the same face in every audience, till I came to loathe it.

,"I was lecturing at Birmingham, on the Monday night, I remember, and, as soon as I began to speak, I noticed that man before me in the fifth row as usual, and I grew cold with fear. But I soon pulled myself together, and

went on with my lecture. The people were very enthusiastic, and enthusiasm is catching; and, somehow or other, I was filled with the sense of victory. And when at the end I told the ball to come to me, and it came, and to go away from me, and it went, I was quite confident and happy; and I put my hand on the ball and said: 'I think if I told it to spin round, it would spin with the motion of the earth on its axis,' and, as I spoke, the ball began to spin; and, when I looked out over the audience in triumph, I noticed the man with the evil face had got up in his place to watch the ball. In half a minute, he sat down again with a grin, as if he had solved the riddle: the poor fool.

"The next afternoon, my boy — he was a nice little fellow — came to me, and asked me for the evening off; his mother, it appeared, lived at Edgbaston, and he wanted to go and see her. But I said:

"'No, Walter; I am not quite well, and I should be nervous without you.'

"He looked at me a little sullenly, I thought, as he replied:

"'You don't need me, professor; you know the ball goes just as well without me: it always starts before I even put my weight on the lever.'

"But I cried:

“No, no, Walter; the excitement of last night has tired me. I cannot let you go. Without you I should be afraid.’

“So I opened my second lecture at Birmingham with the boy in the sphere. The hall was crowded, and the people more enthusiastic than ever; but when, at the end of my lecture, I called the ball to me, it would scarcely move, and when I sent it away it responded very feebly, and I trembled, fearing that Walter was disobedient. In the audience there were murmurs of discontent. Suddenly, the man with the evil face rose and said:

“‘Ladies and gentlemen, I’ve followed these lectures for weeks. That man on the platform is an impostor. I can prove it; his trick is a swindle and a cheat.’ The next moment he had come up beside me on the stage. He declared that there must be a young boy or girl in the ball to move it, and he dared me to let him examine the ball and show what he called the fact. I looked at him and said:

“‘What does the fact prove? Doesn’t the lesson remain whether the ball stands still or moves?’

“He laughed in my face.

“‘Who cares for your lesson?’ he cried; ‘the one thing we want to know is whether you can make dead metal move; you can take your

teaching where you like; is there anyone inside that ball or not? That's what we want to know.'

"A good idea came to me in my extremity, and I said: 'You are absurd. How could a person inside the ball make it spin?'

"And he replied: 'I don't know, but I'll soon find out when I see the mechanism. If there is anyone inside the ball, you are a cheat!'

"And I answered: 'I am not a cheat: what do I cheat you of, if there were some one inside the ball?' but, as I spoke, all the others shouted, and he cried:

"'Let me test the ball,' and I said:

"'You shall not,' and he said:

"'I will.'

"Even as I withstood him, I noticed that all were on his side and against me, and then hatred of them overcame me and contempt, and I said:

"'What if there is a boy in the ball? What will you do then?' and he shouted in triumph, turning to them:

"'I knew it was a boy: he has confessed.'

"I can't tell all they said and did in their rage" — Mortimer was now speaking feebly, as if exhausted — "but, at last, they gave me a pen and ink and told me to write the admission that there was a boy inside the ball

and that I had cheated them, or else they would break open the ball and see for themselves.

"I was tired to death, and my soul was filled with contempt of them and loathing; and, at last, I signed the paper, admitting that I was a cheat, and they jeered at me and spat upon the ground, and crowed that Birmingham was too wise to be taken in by my tricks, and demanded their money back, and went away sneering and triumphant.

"I sat on the platform deserted and alone, shamed to the soul: my life in ruins about me. . . .

"Suddenly a door at the right of the stage opened and little Walter came in. When he saw me, he hesitated:

"‘I am sorry, Professor,’ he said, hanging his head; ‘very sorry. I did so want to see my mother and I went to Edgbaston; but the ball moved didn’t it, just the same?’

"I started to my feet:

"‘You were not in the ball then, Walter?’ I cried; and he answered, looking at me in astonishment:

"‘No, Professor, I was not in the ball. I have only just come back.’”

AN ENGLISH SAINT

AN ENGLISH SAINT

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MR. LAWRENCE had brought tailoring to an art: he had reconciled contradictions; his clothes fitted the individual, yet preserved a distinctive class-fashion and dignity. His own manners were of similar elegance: he met everyone politely from whom he had anything to gain, and yet by subtle gradations of deference proclaimed differences of position. In excellent harmony with his surroundings, he had made money easily and saved a considerable sum; he had no vices so-called, save vanity, and had placed all his hopes in his only son Gerald. He had got Gerald into Harrow, had hoped for years to make an officer of him; the boy's handsome face and figure he thought would be best set off by gold-laced uniform and a mess jacket. But a certain delicacy of constitution, which appeared to have grown with the lad's growth, defeated his hope, and nothing was left for Gerald, in his father's opinion, but the Church; to be a gentleman was the goal of Mr. Law-

rence's ambition. He was ashamed of the shop — "a cut above it" he felt — and would have sought another career for himself had he had the necessary education. He was determined that his son should enjoy all possible advantages of teaching and training.

At first Gerald did not seem to profit by his opportunities. He learned with difficulty, his memory was weak, and his mind flaccid. His father consoled himself with the fact that the boy was growing too fast. "There's no hurry for a year or two," he used to say to himself. So he kept his son at home in his large villa on Putney Hill, and fed him up as a preparation for Oxford. The youth took all that was done for him as a matter of course. He was content to go to Oxford, which seemed to him more aristocratic than Cambridge. He had been taught by bitter experience at the preparatory school that the shop in Bond Street was something to be put behind one and forgotten; and at Harrow his pallor and frailty, something wistful and unearthly in his large eyes, had won sympathy and blunted the malice of boyish curiosity. Gerald had inherited his father's qualities of docility and good humour; but his father's tough resolution to get rich and get on was transmuted in him into a desire to please rather than to rise.

His extraordinary beauty made this ambition appear amiable. Gerald was tall and slight, and his face had the refined regularity of an ascetic Hermes. His father, while proud of his own good features and silver hair, had always regretted a tendency to stoutness and high colour, and his boy's slim figure and pallor appealed to him intensely. "It gives him an air," he said to himself.

Gerald had a good deal of difficulty in getting into Lincoln. His father preferred that college to any other: the name had a stately quietude about it which pleased him, and everybody knew that the Master was a famous scholar, whose mere approval conferred dignity. But though the entrance examination is not supposed to be difficult, it proved almost insurmountable to Gerald. Still, thanks to the clever coaching of an eminent, but poor, scholar, who consented to stay at Putney with them for six months, the difficulty was at length overcome, and Gerald entered Lincoln.

The rooms allotted to him there had formerly been inhabited by a sporting nobleman whose tastes wavered between the photos of Gaiety chorus girls and coloured prints of renowned pugilists. Gerald had to take over the furniture, and, with his usual acquiescence, he occupied the rooms without disturbing either

the rosy biceps of Tom Belcher and Jim Mace or the black legs of the reigning beauties.

Gerald settled down in Oxford easily and quickly. He rather liked rules, and kept them without difficulty; he was never late even for morning chapel. His distinguished appearance and ingratiating manners won him numbers of acquaintances; everyone wanted to know him, and before his first term was at an end he was friendly with nine men out of ten in the college, and on good terms with half the 'Varsity. Yet there were a few bitter drops in his cup. Young Lord Woodstock had shown himself very friendly for a little while and then drawn away coldly. Luke Rattison, too, the Master, had made much of him at first; asked him to lunch and dinner and then left him severely alone. "An amiable idiot" was the bitter-tongued judge's harsh verdict. On the whole, Gerald's first term at Lincoln was rather a success in spite of Lord Woodstock's defection and the Master's disdain. •

When he returned home his father was delighted with him; told him he had let it be known in business circles that he wanted to sell the shop, adding that when he got the price he wanted for it the boy should have the income of a Bishop to spend as he liked. Gerald was suitably grateful, though he scarcely realised

the abyss that lies between poverty and riches. He had always had what he wanted, and his desires had never been sharpened by denial.

Watching him closely his father noticed that his son had taken a liking to fancy waistcoats and coloured ties; he wondered if the boy had fallen in love; and, to tell the truth, there was a barmaid at a village inn on the river above Oxford who had half captivated the youth's fancy. But luckily, or unluckily, Gerald was destined to fall into more skilful hands. Early in his second term he met some one who stopped his drifting and brought him to new bearings. He had been walking along the towing-path, watching the boats on the river, when he was hailed by Lord Woodstock. He went across to him eagerly (Gerald seldom bore malice), and was presented to a Mrs. Leighton.

"I want you to take Mrs. Leighton home," said Lord Woodstock. "It's going to rain, I'm sure, and you've an umbrella. I am due to go out in the 'night.'"

Gerald Lawrence bowed, accepting the trust. He had a sort of vision of a lady about middle height, with steady brown eyes, and a smile that caught his breath. Mrs. Leighton lived about half-a-mile on the other side of Oxford, and on their way through the High he realised that she seemed to know a good deal about

him, though he did not understand that most of her conversation was directed to the increasing of her knowledge. The truth is Mrs. Leighton had been struck with the extraordinary beauty of his face, and had managed to get Lord Woodstock to introduce her without arousing that sharp young gentleman's suspicions.

Mrs. Leighton usually succeeded in whatever she undertook. She was a woman of thirty odd who admitted to twenty-seven or twenty-eight. She had been married very young to an Indian judge some twenty years her senior. He had caught dysentery and died, and had left his widow very well provided for. A house and some three acres of ground on the outskirts of Oxford formed part of his legacy to her. Mrs. Leighton had settled down at Oxford, meaning to occupy her leisure with flirtations if she could get nothing more serious. She had already had two or three little affairs; the one with Woodstock had left a smart of disappointment. She had begun to realise that the extreme youth which appealed to her so intensely had corresponding drawbacks and shortcomings. The fever of it ran high, but it was all embarrassing idealism, adoration even, and mad, unreasoning jealousy, or else it had no enduring continuance. Besides, Mrs.

Leighton was intelligent and loved power even more than pleasure; she desired above everything to play a part in life. The sight of Gerald Lawrence made her catch her breath with admiration; she realised with a thrill that she had never imagined anyone so handsome or with such distinction. Struck with his expression, she had asked Lord Woodstock: "Who is the priest?" and had added something about not caring for willowy men to allay possible jealousy. But now on her way home she realised with a certain apprehension that Gerald's mere appearance had moved her mind and body. The frail pallor of his face stirred her pity, and the great eyes set her throbbing. "Violet eyes," she said to herself; "who would have guessed that eyes could thrill?"

From that day on life assumed a new purpose for Gerald Lawrence. On parting Mrs. Leighton had said to him, "I hope you will come and see me soon." He replied that he'd be happy; but that was not enough for her.

"When, then?" she rejoined, laughing. "You know we women like to prepare a little; we hate to be taken unawares. Come to lunch — what day?"

Gerald hesitated; should he say to-morrow? Instead he questioned, "This week, may I?"

"Of course," she replied. "To-day is Tuesday; shall we say Friday at 1.30?"

And on the Friday he appeared. The house made an extraordinary impression on him; there seemed to him to be pictures everywhere; he had been accustomed to wealth and comfort, but not to refinement and beauty. He was astonished by the profusion of flowers and books and papers, by a sense of lettered and artistic understanding. Mrs. Leighton soon set him at ease and drew him out to talk about himself. After lunch they went into the drawing-room to take coffee, and he informed her that he thought of going into the Church. She encouraged him, and when he went on to confess how the Master and Lord Woodstock had treated him, she salved his hurt vanity and made light of the implied criticism. "The Master," she said, "is a pedantic old bear, and Woodstock was jealous of your good looks."

Gerald had never enjoyed himself so much. He went away promising to come again on the following Monday. Mrs. Leighton found words for her impression: "Innocent," she said to herself, and a little *gauche*, but ——" and she thought of his eyes and fine features and white skin, "but sure to make a sensation as a curate — an unholy sensation," and she smiled comprehendingly.

In a little while the pair became familiar. Gerald used to drop in to tea and sit at Mrs. Leighton's feet. While in that position one day she flattered him outrageously, for she wanted to correct his somewhat pronounced taste for light waistcoats and gaudy ties.

"All your clothes," she said, "should be dark and quiet. You must really begin, Gerald, to see how fine your face is. If you were a woman you would have known it long ago, and tried to live up to it. A woman always lives up to her face if it is pretty. That's why pretty women are so much nicer than ugly ones. With your face a woman would be simply angelic. The Church is the very place for you."

"I'm glad you like me," he replied, shyly taking her hand. She drew him to her a little and gave him her lips.

"You must have seen I like you, Gerald," she said.

"And I like you," he replied, vaguely aware of the challenge; "who could help liking you? It is more than liking"; but he omitted to prove his words.

Vaguely disappointed, she went on flattering him. "Through vanity to the heart" was her unconscious thought.

As they stood together one day at the door of the drawing-room, she said:

"I don't like to let you go, Gerald"; and as he bent down to her she slipped her arms round his neck.

"You never kiss me," she said in a childish whisper, pouting.

He kissed her. "You know I will if you like," he answered.

"If I like," she repeated, chilled and hurt; "don't you want to?"

"Of course I do," was the reply; but the kissing seemed rather to embarrass him.

She laughed aloud to change the current of feeling, and accompanied him to the door. But she had learned her lesson. "He's not like a young man," she said to herself, "there is no passion in him . . . he's merely decorative," she added a little bitterly. But Gerald meant much to her, and in spite of herself she took a lively and continuous interest in him. She was ambitious for him, and gave point and meaning to his vague aspirations by playing on his vanity.

"You will have a great success in the pulpit," she said to him once; "you must be a prince of the Church." The mere words flushed him with pleasure.

"I shouldn't know what to say," he objected.

"That will come," she insisted; "you must read the right books and get into the spirit of the thing"; and there and then made up her mind to advise and encourage him. He was very docile, very amenable to such silken guidance.

In subtler ways, too, she managed to mould and develop him. With a little trouble she got herself invited by the Master's wife, and chaperoned by that emphatic lady, took afternoon tea once in Gerald's rooms. The results of the visit were far-reaching. She was even more horrified by the prints of pugilists than by the photographs of the actresses. She soon induced Gerald to get rid of them all, to pack them all away with the fancy waistcoats and flaming ties.

Before long she had persuaded him to buy a French *prie-dieu* of the fourteenth century and a Byzantine crucifix of the sixth with an angular figure on it in ivory of an astonishingly emaciated Christ. It was Mrs. Leighton who taught Gerald the æsthetic value of austerity; she stripped his rooms of ornament and even of comfort till their bareness began to affect him. All the while she was assiduous to encourage in him the vanity of his personal distinction.

"I love your honey-coloured hair," she said to him one day, "but I wish it were silver. It

would suit you so much better. You will be adorable at fifty. You must let it grow longer, Gerald, not too long, but long enough to be singular. Singularity is the next best thing to beauty. . . .”

“Do you really think me good-looking?” he asked nervously, eager for more sweet.

“Good-looking,” she replied gravely, “isn’t the word. If you ever are as good as your looks, you’ll convert the world. You have only to live up to your face, Gerald, and women will go on their knees to you.”

One evening at dinner Gerald had rather a trying time which gave her a great opportunity. Luke Rattison was the host, and he seemed to take an unholy delight in asking Gerald questions and forcing him to display his mental poverty. Again and again Gerald fell into the trap; again and again Mrs. Leighton sailed in to the rescue gallantly; she was thankful when dinner was over, though she held her own to the end.

“To be as clever as you,” she said to her host when rising, “is really a sort of disease”; and to Mrs. Rattison, in the drawing-room, she remarked: “All high art consists in concealing art, they say; I suppose learning’s different.” Mrs. Leighton believed in revenging herself on her enemy.

But afterwards she took Gerald seriously to task.

"Why talk?" she said. "Why let yourself be made a fool of?"

"What was I to do?" asked Gerald. "I had to try to answer his stupid questions."

"No, no, you hadn't," she said quickly. "Why not have smiled at him in an abstracted kind of way and refused to be drawn out? The less you say the better," she added out of her disappointment. "No one can know what's in you if you don't talk. It's a great deal easier to look wise than to talk wisely. Besides, my dear Gerald, it is your rôle to say nothing. When you have beauty to speak for you, why talk? Silence alone is magnetic."

The dinner had frightened her thoroughly and she set herself at once to strengthen her *protégé's* weak points. She read the Gospels with him, and made him learn some of the great phrases by heart, and begged him to use them in and out of season.

"You have no idea how effective they are," she said; "they never seem out of place in a man who is going to be a clergyman, and they always call up childish associations in all of us and high emotions. We all thrill to them. . . ."

"How clever you are, Amy," he sighed. "If only I had half your brains!"

She pouted and shrugged her shoulders; she was beginning to think that less than half would profit him, but out of loyalty to her affection she put the thought away.

All this while Gerald was not merely passive. Very early in their acquaintance he realised that Mrs. Leighton's advice was excellent. He noticed that since he had taken to dress as she wished, everyone showed greater eagerness to know him, everyone made up to him. A little while after his rooms were swept and garnished, a senior student of Christ Church, who had visited him, declared that there was no man in the college so interesting, no rooms so characteristic. A little later, too, Gerald conquered the flippant unconcern of Lord Woodstock, who came up to his rooms by chance and was astonished beyond measure at the change in them. He fell in love with the Welsh dresser and the old oak refectory table; but the *prie-dieu* and the great Byzantine cross pleased him still more. Gerald explained the change cleverly. "You see, I took over Lord S ——'s rooms, and I didn't like to alter them at once; it would have looked ——" and he stopped.

"Some of the fellows call you the 'Saint,'" Woodstock exclaimed, "and I half-believe you deserve it. You don't go on the river now, do you?"

"No," said Gerald, recalling at once Mrs. Leighton's advice, and adding in an undertone as if to himself something about "my Master's business," and then flushed with doubt of his own daring.

The quotation and flush were not lost on Lord Woodstock. He instantly became serious:

"You must not mind my chaff, old fellow. At the very first, you know, I took to you, and first thoughts are always best, I'm beginning to believe. You must not take my ragging seriously. I chaff a bit, but there's no harm in me, at least so the dear old mater says."

Gerald just nodded, smiling a little. He was wise enough not to say anything more, and Lord Woodstock went away genuinely impressed.

Gerald began to see that an undreamed-of success was possible to him, and his vanity was on fire to realise it. Mrs. Leighton had put a new spirit into him; set an ideal before him which he felt he might reach, and which brought him honour and satisfaction at every step. He began resolutely to try to model himself on her favourite St. Francis, and very soon his progress became astonishing. He had learnt to smoke, as most young men do, but he had never cared for it very much. The truth was, any little excess of any sort shook his weakness at once; an extra cigar or an hour or

so spent in a smoke-laden atmosphere made him dizzy and unwell. Mrs. Leighton advised him to drop it. "Saints shouldn't smoke," she said; and he gave up the practice and felt better for it. Renunciation is a pleasure to the weak. One day at lunch, too, with Mrs. Leighton, he noticed that the coffee and liqueur had flushed his face. He asked her whether she had remarked it.

"Since you ask me, Gerald," she confessed, "I must say I have, and I don't like it in you. It does not matter much," she went on smilingly, "but you ought not to care for any worldly pleasures; you ought not to look hot and healthy. If you were robust or strong you would lose half your distinctive character. You appeal to the pity in one, and pity is the most direct approach to the heart. You should be very pale and hold yourself aloof. Your face is saintly, you must really resolve to grow worthy of it."

He was willing enough to accept the hint; he left off using coffee and liqueurs and a little later began to deny himself meat as well; his vanity ruled him, and whatever increased the spiritual beauty of his face was easy to him. Mrs. Leighton helped him dexterously: she gradually elaborated a rule of conduct, founded on abstemiousness, with the sole object of

etherealising his expression, and her advice did not stop at externals.

"If people talk commonplaces to you, don't answer them," she counselled. "Take no part in worldly conversation. The heavenly world is your kingdom."

On this road they made discovery on discovery, though Mrs. Leighton was nearly always the quicker to draw the true lesson from every incident. A lady of great position had been talking to Gerald in Mrs. Leighton's drawing-room. She had been completely won, partly by his appearance, partly by the thoughtful reticence of his attitude; she was just asking him to come down to C—— to dine and stay the night when he rose smiling, shook his head, and moved away.

Lady L—— did not know whether to be angry or not, but when she saw that Gerald had not left her for anyone else, but was simply staring out of the window, she decided that the rebuff was due to some mistake of her own, or some unimagined greatness in him, and accordingly she made it her business to tell Mrs. Leighton how much she admired him, and to beg her to intercede so that the "Saint" might honour her with a visit.

"I'm afraid," Mrs. Leighton answered, "that Mr. Lawrence will not go, he hates visiting";

but she hastened to add, "he always says he should like to live in a desert, for the spirit has need of solitude."

The great lady was even more impressed; and afterwards Mrs. Leighton told Gerald of the astonishing success of his rudeness and what she had said in excuse.

"Never be afraid of being rude," she said. "Women know their own unworth, and admire everyone who treats them with disdain. Don't be afraid of standing aloof. It is familiarity which cheapens. You are very tall: make everyone look up to you, dear. I told her you were like a monk of the Thebaid: your spirit had need of solitude."

Gerald's success soon began to surprise even his mentor. Someone, probably Lord Woodstock, insisted on calling him the "Saint," and the name "caught on." It became the fashion for the best men to spend half-an-hour nearly every day in the "Saint's" rooms or in his company. Gerald talked less and less, but the asceticism of the rooms and the old-world furniture appealed to all the finer spirits much in the same way as his own personal distinction and reserve appealed to them. He was learning wisdom, too, and when a man once asked him his opinion on some knotty point, he answered:

"I have no opinions." The phrase met with such success that it made him think about it and set him on to find out and elaborate the hidden significance of it.

"I have no opinions," he said a little later; "I have only feelings, and to transplant feelings into words is to make them common, deprive them of colour."

His mind grew under the discipline; every step upwards widened his horizon, forced him to further thought. The books he read helped him, too, as they help weak minds. He read the Gospels over and over again, steeped himself in them, and in the "Imitation." He learned by heart hymns of Herbert, Keble and Faber. The very fact that his mind had no furniture of its own left the chambers of it empty and prepared for the Christian equipment. His weakness of constitution made meekness and gentleness very easy to him. Every assertion of what one might call his femininity of nature pleased him and delighted his friends. Once a man was a little rude to him.

"Forgive me," said Gerald, "I must have offended you unconsciously; I'm sorry." The man stammered apologies, and afterwards took pains to be deferential.

The habit of silence, too, which Gerald

cultivated, and which had grown on him, brought its own reward. He began to notice very soon that what other people said and did made a much deeper impression on him when he was merely listening. His own reticence enabled him to understand other people better, to comprehend them more clearly, and as they felt no self-assertion in him, their own egotism expanded in his company, and he got to know them astonishingly well. He was observant, if not far-seeing.

Every step forward in the new path brought him encouragement and honour. His sayings began to be repeated in the college. No one ever knew who first attributed wisdom to him, but the attribution was successful. Young men in particular were inclined to accord both virtue and power to a man of such extraordinary personal distinction, and still more extraordinary reserve. Excusing himself once for having "sporting his oak," Gerald flowered into the phrase learned unconsciously from Mrs. Leighton, "The soul grows in solitude." The word spread through Oxford as perfume spreads through a room. Gerald was continually profiting by the fact that he was in intimate harmony with his surroundings.

A sort of legend began to form itself about him in his own college. The Master's wife,

of course, knew many undergraduates, and the Gerald legend soon came to her ears. Her little mind had been made up about him, and for some time she did not trouble her husband with the ridiculous rumours. But when the elder fellows and students began to talk in the same way her feminine curiosity was excited, and she spoke to the Master.

"I want to invite that Gerald Lawrence to our garden-party," she said. "You know they call him the 'Saint' now, and some even say he's clever."

"What!" exclaimed her husband, "that nullity! It's impossible. There are many undergraduates who have microscopically small minds, but that man has no mind at all — a magnificent head and nothing in it. He forces me to believe there is truth in the German saying:

Grosse Stirn
Wenig Gehirn

"Everyone can't be mistaken," replied his wife tartly, "and Lawrence has hundreds of admirers. Let's ask him to our garden-party, but without that woman, that Mrs. Leighton — she's a cat."

The Master was indifferent.

"As you like," he said, "one more or less in the garden makes no difference; but Law-

rence is a round ought, and never will be anything more."

The invitation surprised Gerald a little, and luckily for him he took it to Mrs. Leighton. When she read it she clapped her hands.

"A proof of your success, Gerald," she cried, "a double-proof. She asks you and she doesn't ask me. I stuck up for you last time; she therefore revenges herself by not asking me. Yet she is compelled by your reputation to ask you. She has not done it willingly. You must refuse, but how? Can't we think of something that will whet her curiosity! Let's compose a letter together. But first of all let's have lunch: thoughts only come to me with the coffee."

"Eating drives my thoughts away," said Gerald meditatively.

After lunch Mrs. Leighton rose to the occasion:

"Dear Mrs. Rattison," she began, "I dare not accept your kind invitation" ("the truth," she said to herself as she wrote, "the truth's always original"). "Now how can I tell her the faults of her own house?" she mused, and scrawled two or three lines hastily, then ran her pen through what she had written. "No; that won't do," she said, "won't do at all. It's rude and not witty. Ah! I've got it.

I'll blot all that out. This is the letter, Gerald." And she read aloud:

"DEAR MRS. RATTISON, — I dare not accept your invitation. Your garden is charming; but I'm a little frightened of gardeners. They divide all creation into flowers and weeds, and I'm only a weed. You will forgive me, won't you? and let me come and drink tea with you some afternoon?

"Yours in all service,

"GERALD LAWRENCE."

"That last sentence is a masterpiece," cried Mrs. Leighton, "for it divides them and gets the woman on your side. She'll begin to admit her husband's faults and take your side against him, and that new ending's good. It's only a woman who could write like that," and she sighed.

"I think it very clever of you, Amy," said Gerald while stooping over her to sign. As he drew himself up again he put his left hand on her shoulder, and, being pleased with her success and his praise, she looked up at him. The invitation in her regard affected him: he bent and kissed her forehead. She drew his lips down to hers. When he stood up again she felt he was a little rigid and aloof.

"He has no passion in him," she said to

herself afterwards, "not a spark, yet he tempts one. Why?"

She consoled herself very easily. It was a distinction now to be seen with Gerald Lawrence. Everyone stared at them when they passed in the street. She could read envy in the sneers of the older women, and admiration in the girls' eyes. Everyone remarked him. "It's like going about with a great personage," she said to herself. Moreover, his beauty always kept its fascination for her. "They say beauty's only skin deep," she used to say, "but ugliness goes to the bone."

Gerald's letter had a success. Mrs. Rattison brought it to the Master, who pursed his lips over it.

"H'm, h'm! rather rude."

"It's very clever," said Mrs. Rattison. "I wonder if he wrote it himself or whether that cat helped him." She determined to leave the letter unanswered.

But the rising tide of Gerald's reputation forced her hand. Mrs. Rattison resolved not to fail again; she wrote inviting Gerald to dinner, and giving him a couple of weeks' notice; she assured him, with a touch of irony, that he should be treated like a flower. At the same time she wrote to Mrs. Leighton asking her as well.

This move brought about a long talk between the two confederates.

"If you feel strong enough," said Mrs. Leighton, "we'll accept, but this time you must make no mistake. If the Master tries to draw you out, profess ignorance; if he dares to poke fun at you, smile at him kindly and don't answer him: forgive him — that's it!" she exclaimed, "forgive him, and so bring him into *your* domain; don't go into his on any account."

The words came from her heart, and Gerald at once felt their force and had a presentiment of their efficacy. He knew that he had grown wiser since he had last dined at Mrs. Rattison's and he determined now to bring the Master into his domain if possible.

The dinner was a memorable one, epoch-making indeed in Gerald's spiritual life. One or two of the fellows were very deferential to him, and tried to draw him out. Mrs. Rattison spoke of him as the "Saint" to his face; he only smiled, shaking his head in gentle deprecation.

This by-play passed unnoticed by the Master. He talked on in his usual way, picking up one topic after another and making each in turn his own, with a certain robust commonsense buttressed by an extraordinary reading. Gerald

scarcely spoke at all, and because the Master talked too much, Gerald became a sort of second centre of gravity, radiating a higher influence.

Towards the end of the dinner the Master got on one of his favourite topics, the Roman Church and its influence.

"Its discipline and elaborate hierarchy," he said, "afford proof positive of the furious opposition which the Christian doctrine encountered. The Church has the organisation of an army; it's an instrument forged in ten thousand conflicts, a tremendous weapon: the Pope is merely general-in-chief."

At the first pause in the little lecture, one of the fellows who had heard a great deal of such talk turned to Gerald:

"What do you think, Lawrence, do you agree with the Master?"

"I know nothing about it," said Gerald, "but I listen with delight."

"It is a plain proposition," said the Master pompously, "and incontrovertible, I think. Christianity owes its success to the militant organisation of the Roman Church; without that it must have perished."

Every face was turned to Gerald, everyone expected of him some new word, or rather everyone felt that the time had come for him to give expression to their inarticulate disagree-

ment with the Master's shallow and pretentious dogmatism. Suddenly Gerald, thinking of St. Francis, found the word expected of him; his long habit of silence allowed him time to prepare it.

"I distrust organisations," he began, "the spirit's more than the body."

He paused. "'Forgive them for they know not what they do' has not yet been organised, or there would be no prisons," he added.

The Master stared; his natural acuteness, his memory of great thoughts, just enabled him to see that what Gerald said was true, and he admitted to himself reluctantly, "A new truth."

"That view," he retorted gruffly, "is the view a saint would take. I hear they call you a 'Saint,'" he barked at Gerald not unkindly.

Gerald looked at him completely at a loss. The Master's acquiescence had confounded him, but his usual habit of mind came to his aid:

"I'm sorry," he said, "so sorry," looking full at his tormentor as he spoke. The unexpected submission was the *coup-de-grâce*; everyone felt that Gerald had won; and with a little thrill he, too, inferred from the looks of those about him that his victory was conclusive, and he improved it during the rest of

the evening by his silence and deferent courtesy. As he handed Mrs. Leighton into her brougham, she exclaimed:

"Come to see me, to-morrow: you've triumphed, dear! I'm so glad, so glad!"

From that evening Gerald began to see his way clearly. Next day Mrs. Leighton confirmed him in his opinion.

"You did not merely conquer, you wiped the floor with him," she cried. "He's a great burly, commonplace person, and you towered above him. I do not know how you got the words!" she exclaimed. "But they were the very words needed, an inspiration. To forgive ignorance is unthinkable to Luke Rattison. I'm glad Lord Woodstock was at the dinner. What you said had a tremendous effect on him, and he has a great influence in Oxford. Till last night he doubted you. He told me so himself once, and I could not defend you or he'd have suspected there was something between us. Now he believes in you. It's strange how everyone likes to go on their knees before someone else. We women wallow, but men are nearly as bad. Woodstock told me last night that you were the best influence in the University. The thing he liked Oxford best for was that he had met you."

"You think he's important?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," she replied. "He's much abler than anyone imagines. He'll come to great place and power yet, and he'll not be afraid of helping you — the really able man never is afraid to back his opinion."

A little later his fellow students began to go out of their way to show their admiration for Gerald. At first they used to send him flowers, and occasionally books. Then comparative strangers took to sending him pictures, thirteenth century saints in wood from convents in France, triptychs from Italy and South Germany. The son of the British Ambassador in Russia sent him a Russian primitive of the fourteenth century, a panel picture, that might have been of the school of Cimabue. The heads of six saints were painted on a gilded background round the figure of the Saviour. Each head was cunningly differenced by the artist who had yet naïvely put the name on one side of it, and on the other an appropriate text. The picture was a remarkable mixture of artistic power and saintly piety. The youth despatched it to Gerald with a letter hoping that he would accept it as a token of his gratitude; he would be very proud, he said, to imagine it hanging between the two windows in Gerald's sitting-room, and there Gerald placed it. But oftener the gifts were

anonymous. Curiously enough, ever since the dinner, Mrs. Leighton herself had got into the habit of deferring a little to Gerald. Success impresses even the keen-sighted.

The praise and admiration which hung about Gerald did not smooth his way through the schools. He was a wretched scholar; even the childish Greek of the New Testament was difficult to him. But he was helped through by his acquaintance with the English text. The other subjects were even harder to master. The catechism, articles, and rubrics of the Church were utterly beyond him. Often he could scarcely understand them, and he was never able to recall or use them. But he had grown cleverer in the knowledge of such phrases as appealed to his temperament, and the examiners were not so pedantic or so oblivious of public opinion as to plough the "Saint" for ignorance of the letter: Gerald scraped through with a "pass" degree.

Long before the end of his time at Oxford he was asked to read lessons in this or that church, and these readings increased his reputation enormously. With his vanity went a good deal of the actor's temperament, and this induced him to seek singularity at all costs. As soon as he began to read in public he found that his voice was weak and almost

toneless; he determined at once to make a merit of his failing, a distinction of his defect. Other people talked, or spoke, or ranted in the pulpit; he alone used a slow, unaccented, monotonous delivery which seemed to lend each word peculiar significance. Perhaps in any other man this custom would have palled; but there was about Gerald the magic of personality, and his pale face, lighted up by the great eyes, was so singularly beautiful that it seemed of itself to add weight and interest to the simplest words. One thing was certain — no one could deny the originality of his method of reading, or mistake his effects for those of any other man.

All Gerald's shortcomings of mind, no less than his gifts, including even his nickname the "Saint," seemed to lead him back to the old Catholic church. He loved, as we have said, all observances and rules like a woman loves corsets, and perhaps for similar reasons; he felt grateful for their support, and was profoundly influenced by their decorative value. Almost insensibly he began to refer everything to the Early Church and early Christian practice.

St. Francis d'Assisi, as we have seen, was his special pattern, and the three vows of the saint were often in his mind. Curiously enough

the first custom he took up of the mediæval Church had an enduring effect on his life. Inspired by Mrs. Leighton with the necessity of keeping his distinctive pallor, he had begun to practise partial fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; he soon found that such abstinence not only increased the spirituality of his expression, but also quickened his intellect in the most unexpected way. While the body was empty he seemed to understand more clearly everything he read. His thoughts, indeed, ran quicker than the text. After an hour or so, it is true, he felt tired, and his mind began to dance about and beat time instead of moving forward. But at first, while fresh, he was conscious of a peculiar lucidity and ease of mental vision. The fact so encouraged him that he gradually changed from partial fasting to a complete fast, and contented himself on such days with an occasional cup of tea. The consequences were important. His face grew even more refined and impressive; his skin became almost transparent. The features sharpened, the eyes seemed larger as the face grew thinner. There could be no doubt that the spirituality of his appearance was intensified. His intellect, too, expanded rapidly; his reading became more and more fruitful to him. The chambers of his mind were gradually being furnished in

the style of the Middle Ages, and when he was moved, his speech took on the quaint simplicity and child-like directness of mediæval teachers; he began to be impregnated with the finest perfume, so to speak, of the Christian spirit.

In all his after-life he regarded the habit of self-denial, which began by leaving off smoking and drinking, and culminated in regular and long fasting, as his initiation into the spiritual life. His first complete fast he always regarded as his "conversion," so to speak, to the Christian faith.

The habit of fasting was a blessing to him in many ways, but he gradually became conscious that it had one unexpected and peculiar drawback. He had never been troubled, as stronger youths are troubled, with sensuous desires which spring into being almost without cause, and make every waking hour a temptation and a plague, while breaking in on sleep even with the irresistible seduction of dreams. But fasting excited the animal nature in Gerald; threatened life put forth all its reproductive vigour, and at first he was completely at a loss whether to fight the new foe or yield. His training in self-denial taught him to resist, and during the day he found it easy to change the current of his thoughts or sensations by long walks. But at night he was powerless.

He began to suffer from insomnia. He fought the dreams by reading and by increasing his walks in the day-time, so that the tired body might fall into dreamless slumber. The long walks and sleeplessness combined reacted on his appearance and increased his attractiveness. He grew stronger, too, as he grew thinner. It was Mrs. Leighton's idea that he should go to a fancy dress ball at a house near Oxford dressed as a Franciscan. His appearance was a sort of event. The monk's dress suited him peculiarly, set off the refined spirituality of his face, so that everyone was struck by it. From that night on Oxford counted him among its illustrations.

Shortly before he "went down" he received a letter offering him a vicarage in Surrey, with an income of £600 a year, as soon as he was ordained. He took the letter to Mrs. Leighton, and she soon discovered that the man in whose gift the advowson lay was a friend and political supporter of Lord Woodstock, who had left Oxford the term before. It was probable that he had instigated the offer. Gerald, however, told Mrs. Leighton that he had resolved to go to the East End of London for a couple of years, at least, before taking any cure of souls, and she approved of his intention. He therefore wrote thanking his would-be benefactor,

and telling him of his purpose. The gentleman replied that he quite understood; but would, nevertheless, keep the living open for Mr. Lawrence.

In fact, just as people sent him gifts to adorn his rooms, so his path upward in life was made plain for him; everyone seemed eager to put their cloaks down to help him over the muddy places — another proof of how intensely his peculiar gifts and graces appealed to his contemporaries.

The relations between Gerald and Mrs. Leighton during the Oxford time had become very intimate without ever going beyond the limits of platonic friendship. She made up her mind very soon that he was not passionate; and she took such an interest in his success and mental growth, and had so many motherly fears for his health, that this somewhat unnatural relation managed to subsist. So long as Lord Woodstock was at Oxford and came from time to time to see her, she was fairly content, but after he had left, and Gerald had gone to the East End, Mrs. Leighton soon found life in Oxford intolerable. The absence of Gerald had revealed to her her own loneliness in an extraordinary way. In a week solitude became a sort of disease to her. She did not know what to do with herself, and could hardly

find energy enough to get up and dress or order meals, the eating of which was a plague and weariness. She missed the walks and talks with Gerald, and above all she missed the someone to think of and make plans for; her life was without a purpose. She put her house in the hands of an agent to sell, and determined that when it was sold she would move to London. The house quickly found a purchaser, and she soon discovered a house in Wilton Place, near Albert Gate, that would suit her. In a few months she transferred her belongings and her own charming personality to London, where she would be near Gerald, and where, too, Woodstock would be able to come to see her from time to time. She would be much more likely, she said to herself, to meet someone who would marry her in London than in Oxford.

She nestled down cosily in Wilton Place before the decorations were finished. She simply had to have Gerald come and see her. She had written him letters every day, and heralded her first free evening in London by a long telegram telling him to come and dine with her at eight o'clock.

They had only been parted a few short months, and yet as soon as he entered the room she was conscious of a change in him — a

surprising change. She felt at once that some unknown influence had come between them. Her heart contracted violently as under a painful grasp. What had happened? Could he have fallen in love? She put the thought out of her mind. It was impossible, she decided. But he had changed, he was more virile; the clasp of his hand was stronger, he moved more lightly. What can it be? *Who* can it be? she asked herself, resolved to find out.

The truth was as simple as the truth usually is. Although Gerald had learned a great deal at Oxford, when he came to London he was still hardly more than a boy. His vanity and Mrs. Leighton's teaching had given him an ideal in life; but it was London and its temptations which first discovered his individual soul. He had had success after success at Oxford, now he was brought to defeat on defeat. At first he had been stunned by London, and had immersed himself in the work and visiting of the Toynbee Settlement; but fasting and loneliness brought the sensual thoughts, thoughts which had now grown stronger and would not be subdued. When the impulses of the body threatened to conquer, he got into the habit of going to stay with his father on Putney Hill, thinking that the change might help him in the conflict. And at first

it seemed to help him. But the table at Putney Hill was very generous, and his father, alarmed by his pallor and fragility, insisted on his taking wine and feeding up. The result on his hardened body accustomed to ascetic living was immediate: sensual imaginings ruled him, he began to be obsessed by them; in vain he fought; the Nessus shirt clung stinging; all he could do was to betake himself to the East End again and read, visit and pray so assiduously as to leave no time for thought. In this condition temptation was irresistible.

The men at the Settlement had got up a concert, and among others the Sisters Weldon had been engaged to dance and sing. They were local celebrities, a pair of girls about twenty who had made a reputation in Hackney and the neighbourhood. They were motherless orphans, very pretty and clever, and everyone took an interest in them. Doris, the elder, was perhaps the prettier of the two according to the conventional standard, but Chrissie was a finer performer and a more self-willed and stronger nature. When they came out and danced before him in their short skirts, Gerald, who was on the platform and could have touched them, felt as if he must choke. The elder girl he thought pretty, very pretty even;

but the younger, the dark sister, as he called her to himself, took possession of him body and soul. She danced, he saw, with infinitely more expression than her sister, and her figure was more attractive. He could not help studying it as she swayed and curtsied before him. When they stopped, and the storm of clapping subsided, Gerald turned to his neighbour with a question, but found he could not speak without betraying his emotion; his mouth was parched as with fever. He looked down and studied his card, and when he found that the sisters were to appear again he drew a long breath of relief.

He never knew what happened till they came on again and passed him going down to the footlights. This time they were both dressed like soldiers, something like Hungarian hussars, in close-fitting, dark-blue breeches, high boots and spurs, and short scarlet jackets which set off the shapely roundness of the younger girl's hips. Gerald felt his face flushing in spite of himself. He was a little annoyed and frightened lest others seeing her should fall in love with her, for he could not help admiring her mutinous dark face, her gay vivacity, her lovely form. Her sister merely danced, but brave little Chrissie threw abandon into her steps and a hint of passion; every movement of her body

to him was provocative. To save his life he could not help absorbing and studying every contour of the swaying figure. It was the first time he had ever noticed the subtle, hesitating line of a woman's torso, and he gave himself up to the enchantment.

This dance of the Weldons closed the programme for the evening. With the other men of the Settlement Gerald passed behind the scenes and was introduced to the artists in order to congratulate and thank them. As the sisters prepared to go the courage of despair came to Gerald, and he told the elder sister he should like to call on them. She noticed that while he spoke he looked at Chrissie, but she was flattered by the attention and asked him to come the next day, and so the fateful acquaintance began.

They lived, he found, in a couple of rooms in Mare Street, Hackney; the thoroughfare was noisy and vulgar, relentless in its sordid squalor. The sitting-room shocked Gerald; it all seemed common, ugly, he said to himself, but Chrissie shone in the mean room like a diamond shines on black paper. She treated him as he had never been treated before, with perfect frankness. Evidently she had neither admiration for him nor fear of him. When he refused the cake and bread and butter she

took an extra mouthful of cake herself and said:

"You don't know what you're missing," and laughed saucily. The careless word seemed to Gerald extraordinarily significant.

"Perhaps I don't know what I'm missing," he said; "I'll take some cake, if you please," and he did.

His desire to please made him tactful; he talked about their dancing. The elder sister, Doris, admitted that they were trying to get an engagement at the Palace Theatre. Chrissie declared, with her mouth full, that she was going to-morrow to see old Norton, and that it would be hard lines if he did not engage them!

"Hard lines, indeed!" thought Gerald, with a pang of fear for the rivalry of unseen competitors.

All this while he was wondering how he could get to know the sisters better, become intimate with them as he had become intimate with Mrs. Leighton. He could have touched Mrs. Leighton, he felt, if he had wanted to; but he had never wanted to. Now every movement of Chrissie Weldon made him want to put his hands on her. After they had finished tea she sat in a chair opposite him and crossed her legs; the blood began to beat in his temples. A thought came to him:

"How are you going to the Palace?" he asked.

"On these, of course," she replied, thrusting forward her little feet. "Shanks's mare, eh, Doris?"

"Suppose I get a carriage and drive you there, and afterwards take you round the park?"

"Oh, glory, glory," cried Chrissie, springing to her feet, "a landau with two horses, eh? Fancy, Doris, we'll be going like queens," and she seized her sister and danced her round and round.

Suddenly she stopped, pouting. "I forgot; I've only my old hat, and it's shabby, shabby!"

"Why not buy a new one?" suggested clever Gerald.

She looked at him eagerly. He pleased her, and had begun to interest her. But the elder sister broke in at once:

"We don't accept presents from gentlemen," she said primly, "although we think it very kind of you, Mr. Lawrence, all the same, and we'll accept your offer of the carriage with pleasure."

He felt depressed, wondered vaguely where middle-class morality began and where it ended. But nothing could subdue Chrissie's high spirits for long. The thought of the

carriage intoxicated her, and again she flung her arms round her sister and whirled her round the room, singing:

“A carriage and pair in London town, in London town, in London town,

Only to earn an honest brown, an honest brown, an honest brown,”

while laughing over her shoulder coquettishly at Gerald.

Next day they had their drive. Doris made him wait with the carriage at the corner of a neighbouring street, where they would not be known, and all through Hackney they drove with the carriage closed, but as soon as they got out of their own neighbourhood the carriage was thrown open and the girls gave themselves over to the rare enjoyment.

At the Palace, too, they succeeded in getting an engagement. Chrissie's spirits were irresistible. She came out of the theatre like a little mad thing, with flushed face and sparkling dark eyes, excited, as she said, to “the limit,” and away they drove through the parks like grand ladies. Towards sunset Gerald proposed dinner, and swept away all opposition, and they had dinner together in the only place he knew — the East Room of the Criterion, where, however, the appointments and service were good enough to strike the sisters dumb with admi-

ration. Driving home they both thanked him again and again. When he put them down near Mare Street, Gerald lifted Chrissie from the carriage in his arms — an unforgettable sensation.

He dismissed the carriage hastily; he wanted to be alone with his thoughts. He seemed to walk on air. Life had taken on a new colour for him, a new significance. His heart was beating as it had never beaten before; his blood all rhythmic — she was the loveliest creature in the world, the gayest, the sweetest, the most enchanting, the most desirable. He must win her, he felt, or lose the pearl of life.

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After that long, first day the intimacy with Chrissie grew by leaps and bounds. Gerald could never remember the ebbing and flowing of the tide of passion that seemed to reach flood in an hour, and swept him away like a straw; but the moments of it were epochs in his life. One such moment occurred just before the first appearance of the sisters on the stage of the Palace Theatre. The manager had been taken by their dancing in soldiers' dress and had ordered them new tights of the same sort, only more striking in colour, and, of course, better made. When Gerald called one afternoon he

found Chrissie alone. The girls had been trying on Chrissie's new costume; and Doris had had to run out for a few minutes to buy some tape. Chrissie talked to him through the half-open door.

"Do come in here," he pleaded; "I can't see you, and I want to."

She shook her head. "Doris wouldn't like it. You must wait."

"Please," he persisted, "do let me just see you. You are so beautiful. I'm sure the dress is perfect. Do come out."

The mischievous laughing face appeared at the half-open door. "You must wait," she repeated, as if undecided. He went to the door and pushed it nearly open.

"Come in," he begged; "Chrissie, come in," and she yielded to his desire.

The traitor dress clothed her like a skin. Again his mouth parched and his temples beat as they did the first night he watched her on the stage. As he didn't speak, she grew a little piqued:

"You don't like it?" she asked a little anxiously, turning round as if to show it all to him.

The movement threw the line of her waist and the bold curve of the hips into relief: she was adorable; his hands went out of themselves; he caught her and drew her to him passionately.

She turned her head over her shoulder and repeated archly:

“You don’t like it?”

His hands came up from her waist to her breast, and he bent down to her face:

“Of course, I like it,” and he kissed her red lips; “who could help liking it? Chrissie, I love you, dear! Do you care for me?”

“Now, would I let you kiss me if I didn’t?” she pouted. “You are too sweet to us. But tell me: do you like the dress?”

“It’s charming,” he said. “You do care, then, a little for me?”

She turned to him and put her arms round his neck like a child, and drew his head down and kissed him as innocently as a child kisses on the lips.

“I do like you,” she said. “You’re so kind, and I like your height and big eyes; but,” she added gravely, “you must get stronger, you know. Doris thinks you’re consumptive. You’re not, are you?”

“No, no,” he laughed. “I never was so well in my life, nor so strong.” He stooped down and put his arms round her hips, and lifted her from the ground. She crowed with delight: “Oh, oh, oh!”

“You must put me down,” she laughed delightedly. “If Doris came in she would be

very cross. Quick! quick!" and she wriggled in his arms.

That fleeting instant and its poignant emotion remained with Gerald all his life. At any moment he could close his eyes and see again the mutinous gay, laughing face, the silky dark ringlets of hair, and the saucy challenging eyes, and could feel the round firmness of the limbs he was holding against him. His hands and body bore the imprint of her form; it seemed to him as if the outline had been burned into his flesh.

He let her slide down slowly, for he was loth to part from her. As soon as she touched ground she shook herself to put her clothes straight, and ran laughing from the room.

He did all he could to get her to come out again; he even threatened to come in and fetch her. She cried out in mock alarm:

"No, no; you mustn't."

He knew the fear was only put on, and was about to go in when Doris opened the sitting-room door.

Why was it, he wondered later, that such magic moments in life are so fleeting-transitory?

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The next incident that counted with Gerald was of a very different nature; it occurred

on the first appearance of the sisters at the Palace Theatre. A week before that event Mrs. Leighton came up to London, and everything was changed for him. Mrs. Leighton, contrary to her custom, was very exigent. She pressed him to come with her to choose furniture and curtains and a dozen other things; she insisted on being introduced to his father and invited him to lunch and dine with her. Gerald thought it strange that the two should strike up a friendship; for his father, though distinguished-looking, dropped his "h's," very often and always showed in his speech that he belonged rather to the lower than to the upper middle-class. These little failings grated on Gerald sometimes, in spite of his love for his father; but Mrs. Leighton never seemed to notice them. She managed to engross Gerald so completely, what with luncheons and dinners and visits to Putney, that he could not spend half as much time with Chrissie as he desired. This annoyed him, and he began to show a certain coldness to Mrs. Leighton.

He did not know that his little impatiences were revealing his secret to that observant lady just as clearly as if he had told her the whole truth. He did his best not to betray himself, for he felt instinctively that Mrs. Leighton would not like the sisters, and would dislike

Chrissie in particular, and he cared for Chrissie so intensely that he could not bear the idea of her being criticised or looked at coldly. Accordingly he kept his love to himself, and reproached himself daily for not tearing himself free from Mrs. Leighton's importunities.

If he had only known it, no tactics could have served him better with Chrissie. He had brought an atmosphere of pleasure, and ease, and enjoyment into her life, and thrown over it the magic of love as well; but it all seemed so easy and natural to her that at first she rather underrated his devotion. But now that he stayed away for whole days, Chrissie missed him, as she complained to her sister, "at every hand's turn." She even began to fear that she might lose him altogether. She could not help dreading lest some of the ladies in the park might get him. She thought about him every hour, wondering where he was, what he was doing, why he stayed away, and when he would be back. Love's arrow's barbed, and the more it's disturbed the deeper it pierces. In a fortnight Chrissie's affection was intensified to love. Her time from eleven to four was taken up by rehearsals; but the evenings when Gerald stayed away were cruelly dull and empty. Gerald's days, too, were all filled by Mrs. Leighton, and he had continually to struggle

to get free in the evening. But still the lovers met very often, and with every meeting their affection seemed to put forth fresh flowers.

By this time Mrs. Leighton knew that Gerald was in love with a singer; knew, too, that she would appear at the Palace Theatre on the Monday night. On Tuesday or Wednesday the week before, Chrissie had given Gerald a playbill in which the sisters were announced to appear. He had crumpled it up and thrust it into his pocket, but somehow or other Mrs. Leighton had got hold of it, and as soon as she saw *The Sisters Weldon*, she felt that one of them had come between her and Gerald. She took a box on the grand tier for the Monday evening. As soon as she entered the box she saw Gerald in the front row of the stalls. When the sisters came on she picked out the younger sister, Chrissie, at once. "A vulgar, common little thing," she said to herself, "light-hearted, light-footed — light in every way. What fools men are! What fools!"

She hardly looked at Gerald; yet she knew that his glasses were glued to his eyes. She knew, too, that after the theatre he would take "the little gutter-sparrow" home. She felt certain that the sisters lived somewhere in the East End. A storm of clapping broke in upon her thoughts, the sisters were being recalled

again and again; they had "caught on" the very first night. Mrs. Leighton was rather glad of their success; perhaps they would need Gerald less now.

When the sisters came on again in obedience to the demands of the house, she noticed that the younger sister exchanged glances with Gerald and danced for him, "at him," she said to herself viciously. Evidently the girl had been nervous at first; but now, having gained self-possession, was dancing for the man she loved. In spite of herself Mrs. Leighton felt Chrissie's charm, her sauciness, her exquisite girlish figure, the attraction of her childish passionate appeal; but the feeling made her cold with hate and resolution.

"We shall see, my girl," she said to herself, "who will win," and she closed her opera-glasses and went home.

When the sisters' second turn was over, Gerald went round to the stage-door to wait for them. He had hired a carriage to take them home. The commissionaire told him they would be out in a few minutes. He nodded and waited, promising himself some amusement in the sights of the strange place. Suddenly he became aware that he had formidable rivals. There was a young, slim, good-looking fellow, whom he took to be an officer, who sent

in two bouquets to the sisters, together with a card on which he had written a request that they would have supper with him. Gerald grew white with anger at the cool assumption of the man and the airy self-confidence of his manner. But he could not help admiring the young fellow when he took out half a sovereign and gave it to the commissionaire, with the request that he should hand the bouquets to the elder sister and the note to the younger.

A few minutes later Gerald was face to face with another aspirant, a stout, over-dressed Jew of about forty, to whom the commissionaire was very polite. He wanted to know if the stage-manager was in, and when the commissionaire said he was, he laughed loudly:

"I'll go and see him, Williams," he said, "I want to know those Weldons, that's their name — isn't it? Eh? I'll just go in and see 'em."

To Gerald's rage he pushed through the stage-door as if the place belonged to him.

The moments of waiting seemed to age Gerald; in five minutes he was whirled through a thousand emotions, and had made a hundred resolutions.

"If they speak to that cad, I'll never speak to them again," he vowed to himself. The next moment he wanted to choke the "foul

brute," or beat his fat face into a pulp. The soldier, too, who whistled there nonchalantly, came in for a share of Gerald's rage and contempt. He hated him as much as he loathed the vulgarian. He determined to go away and leave Chrissie to her friends. Perhaps she had already given them some encouragement; perhaps even she had already smiled on the fat man. His very soul sickened at the thought of any connection between them; she seemed to him dirtied by the man's desire. He would go away and leave them, and he turned towards the street. Just at that moment the swinging door was thrown open and the sisters came out, Chrissie first, as usual, carrying the officer's bouquet, as Gerald noticed at once. In a second the officer had come forward, and taking off his hat had begun to speak. Gerald suddenly felt that he, too, ought to have sent Chrissie a bouquet, and he was disgusted with himself for not thinking of it sooner. His anger with Chrissie had fled at the mere sight of her.

"My name's Vincent," said the officer. "I see you have my flowers, Miss Weldon. I do hope it's a sign that you and your sister will forgive the informality of the introduction and be my guests to-night at the Savoy?"

"Oh, thank you," said Chrissie prettily, "but

we cannot come," and she passed straight on to Gerald.

"I saw you in front," she said to him, and in a whisper added: "I danced for you, sir!"

No one could resist her; yet Gerald heard himself answer in a strange, hard voice:

"Why did you speak to him?"

He noticed that the young fellow was talking to Doris. Even Doris was smiling at him, though she, too, refused his invitation.

The next moment Gerald had the sisters in the carriage and was driving away, the officer taking off his hat in gay salute, which filled the cup of Gerald's ill-humour to the brim.

"What's the matter, dear?" cried Chrissie.

"Nothing," replied Gerald angrily; "but why did you speak to him?"

"How could I help it?" said Chrissie laughing, pleased with his manifest jealousy. "I had his flowers in my hand, and he was quite polite."

"Polite," repeated Gerald bitterly. "Did you see the old fat Jew?"

"The stage-manager introduced Mr. Graham to us," she replied proudly. "He's a stock-broker and the chief shareholder in the theatre; even Doris was polite to him, weren't you, Doris?"

"I didn't want to supper with him," replied Doris, "but I thought we had better."

Gerald felt strangled. Was this what his love had brought him, this unworthy competition, this vile rivalry? He saw, as with second sight, that the "guinea-pig," as he called him, was a more formidable competitor even than the good-looking young officer.

"Are all women venal?" he asked himself bitterly, for both the girls spoke of Graham with awed respect.

"He's very rich," said Chrissie.

"And knows everyone," echoed Doris.

"Their very souls," he thought to himself, "are servile to riches and success."

But in a few minutes the reaction came. He would give Chrissie up to none of them. Why should he? He had good looks as well as the officer, and money to spend as freely as the City man. He triumphed to himself. Why should he not win? Why should he not take them to supper? At once, without asking, he put his head out of the window and told the coachman to drive to the Savoy.

"I'm going to take you to the Savoy to supper," he said.

"You dear!" cried Chrissie, clapping his face with her hands.

"Chrissie, Chrissie," cried Doris reprovingly.

"It's very kind of you, Mr. Lawrence," she added; "but we're not dressed for the Savoy."

"Any dress will do," he said in his ignorance (the officer had said the Savoy), and overbore their opposition. But when the sisters entered the restaurant and saw the girls and ladies elegantly gowned crowding into the supper-room, both Doris and Chrissie shrank back declaring that it was impossible for them to go in; but he insisted, and carried the matter off with a high hand. When they were seated, however, he was annoyed to find that dress does make a difference to women, for both the girls were ill at ease.

"Why should you not let me give you frocks?" he said, as soon as he realised their discomfort. "Eat your supper and drink your champagne, and to-morrow you shall have two white evening gowns, and we'll come again. After all," he added, glancing round, "you're the two prettiest girls in the room."

And, indeed, the little dark dresses and unwonted hats seemed to set off the charm of the girls' youthful beauty. Many of the men as they passed out looked down at them with frank admiration. It seemed to Gerald as if the world were in a conspiracy to put him in a secondary place.

"But, after all," he said to himself, "I know

Chrissie does care for me, and it will be my own fault if anyone else gets her," and he redoubled his attentions.

While driving back he managed to take Chrissie's hand in the dark; it nestled into his all the way home, and gave him renewed courage and joy. With this support he wrung from Doris a half-promise that they would accept evening dresses from him. When they got inside the house, Chrissie made some excuse to turn back in the passage and speak to him at the street door. She gave him her lips at once. "Good-night, dear," she said. "It's been a treat," and she sighed contentedly.

When alone with his thoughts and able to analyse his impressions and emotions, Gerald realised that the poetry of his love, the idyllic beauty of it, had vanished with the sense of combat. Chrissie was no longer angelic, she had become a little dancer, and he had to win her and keep her. His love had been transmuted by jealousy into passion, just as loneliness and disquieting doubts had deepened Chrissie's affection into love.

• After leaving the theatre Mrs. Leighton sat down and thought the matter over. "I need help," she confessed to herself. Her instinct had been right, she felt, in getting to know Gerald's father. She could reckon on the

old man now, and use him. Early next morning she drove out to Putney, and while walking in the garden confided to old Mr. Lawrence all she knew about Gerald's "unhappy entanglement." She thought it her duty to tell him, she said. He must never let Gerald know where he had learned it. He must go to the Palace Theatre to see for himself. She drew a shocking caricature of Chrissie as "a vulgar, little dancing-girl," who showed her "body more than half-naked on the stage." Her appeal to the old man's prudery was decisive; in an hour she had worked him up to a passionate resolution. By lunch-time she had assured herself that he knew just what he ought to say to Gerald.

The result was much what she anticipated. Stuttering with indignation, Mr. Lawrence went off to see Gerald next morning. He told him he was mad, that he must think of his career, and of decency, and so forth in the customary strain, and then returned to tell Mrs. Leighton all that he had said, leaving out the fact that he had asked Gerald why he didn't marry Mrs. Leighton, who was a lady of position and wealth, and beautiful to boot.

The suggestion startled Gerald as much as it angered him. He had never thought of such a thing, he said; besides, Mrs. Leighton was

too old. But his father's unsparing condemnation of Chrissie had had a certain effect on him. The old man's scorn for the girl who could show off her figure in tights really lit unworthy jealous suspicions in Gerald which bore evil fruits later. He was compact of English prejudices; he began to doubt the girl's purity, which was as obvious as sunlight, because of the way she danced and dressed.

A few hours after his father had given Mrs. Leighton his version of the lecture he had administered to his son, Gerald betook himself to Wilton Place, too, for sympathy and advice. Mrs. Leighton began by soothing and flattering him. Of course, true love was beautiful, she said, the ideal; but he had a great career before him, and he should consider his father's feelings. Gerald ought to be a prince of the Church: princes only married common girls when they were born princes, but when they had to make themselves princes they could not afford to marry beneath them, and so forth.

"Don't you see, Chrissie's a miracle?" he asked glowering; "there's no one like her."

Mrs. Leighton admitted that she was very pretty, but added that he really must not idealise her out of all likeness to humanity; she was illiterate, of course, and vain, glad to accept anyone's attentions — both sisters were of the

lower middle-class. She saw at once that she was on the right track. "Do you really care for her, really?" she asked.

He nodded, his face rigid with pain.

"Your father thinks you'll take her to Paris," she remarked casually, playing her trump boldly. Gerald, she felt, would soon tire of Chrissie in Paris.

He started to his feet. "Oh! He — you —"

She faced him bravely. "It would be the best thing you could do. (He glared at her.) Why should you quarrel with me, because I'd give you everything you want in life, I'd give you the moon if I could," and then she found the supreme word: "If you don't take her, Gerald, someone else will."

It struck him to the very heart. Yes, if he didn't take her Graham would, and Doris would not help her to resist; *she* certainly was lower middle-class, prim at once, and servile. And Chrissie, sweet though she was, was vain. What should he do?

His jealousy of Graham discoloured the world for him; "someone else" rankled.

He left Mrs. Leighton in a whirl of jealousy, desire and wounded vanity.

Was he really making an angel, as she had said, of a little dancing-girl; trying to see a London sparrow as a bird of paradise? How

her words stung! They stung, he reflected, because of the truth in them. The picture of greasy, bald-headed Graham, like some obscene bird of prey, kept thrusting itself before his mind.

He could not rest in the Settlement. He went off to Mare Street to take them out. They were not in. The landlady confided to him that a gentleman had taken them out for the evening.

“What was he like?” Gerald asked, smiling to conceal his misery and rage. 丿

“Oh, he was quite a gentleman — a foreign gentleman, I thought, a little elderly, but — he had brought fur wraps for both of them, real sable, Russian sable . . .” The landlady was voluble in the giver’s praise. Gerald’s heart throbbed; it was Graham. He turned from the door thanking her. But he was called back. In her eagerness to help, the landlady called out to him that she had heard the gentleman say they would take supper at the Savoy.

Gerald went to the Savoy, and there they were in the restaurant. He waited about for more than an hour to see them come out: Chrissie, flushed with excitement, talking sixteen to the dozen, as usual. His heart sank. As they reached the door he saw Graham put his hand on her bare arm to keep her back and let Doris

go out first, and then he saw him, on the pretext of arranging her fur, touch her bare neck with his hand. Chrissie did not thrust him back, or shrink from his touch; she smiled at him, in fact, as she passed out.

Gerald was lost in jealous rage, dazed in agonies of doubt and fear. He was brought to himself by the porter tapping him on the arm:

“We must close, sir, if you please.”

The restaurant was shrouded, dark; only the lights over the desk threw uncertain gleams; the carriages had all rolled away. He went out into the empty street.

All through the night he stormed; but as hour after hour went on, one thing became clear to him — he would have her; he would not leave her to that foul beast, that old Jew satyr. He would take her away at once. He must make no mistake. He would go first to Mrs. Leighton and ask her advice. He was at her house by eight o'clock in the morning, and she saw him at half-past in her *peignoir*, and was all sympathy.

“You poor boy,” she cried as she caught sight of him, “how ill you look!”

In spite of himself he told her everything — his doubts of Chrissie, his suspicions, everything — he raved to her, and then broke down and cried

like a child with his head on her knees, sobbing hysterically. He alarmed her; she feared for his reason; she had never before understood how weak he was. There was nothing for it, she felt, but to give the child his toy. With this purpose she spoke, encouraging him. Of course, Chrissie loved him, but she was shallow and vain. He must be always with her, never leave her alone, he must take her to the theatre and back again, to dinner and to supper. If the other gave them furs, Gerald must give them dresses and hats. If the other recommended them to stage-managers, Gerald should take the stage-managers out to supper with them.

She concluded: "If Graham gets them a rise in salary, you must give them bracelets and brooches. Play the man," she cried at him finally, "and not the mouse."

Before she had half-finished, all the man in him had responded to her. He kissed her hands and caught her to him, and kissed her face, and hurried off to carry out her instructions, and to tread the primrose path to his desire.

In twenty-four hours he had reason to congratulate himself. In a week he had won Chrissie so that she had no thought or wish beyond him. The dresses he gave her and the jewels, forced even Doris to agree with the land-

lady that he was madly in love; but still he could not induce Chrissie to take the irrevocable step and leave London. He wanted to get her away from Graham and his vile attentions; but to Chrissie leaving London meant leaving Doris and success on the stage. The girl's loyalty to her sister was invincible. He went again to Mrs. Leighton. Her advice was veiled, but decisive.

"Win her," she said, "and the girl will follow you."

"But how? What do you mean?" he asked. "Do help me!"

Mrs. Leighton looked at him. Could any man be so inconceivably ignorant.

"Take her for a long drive," she said at length, "up the river, or out to Hampstead, or to Richmond. Take a private room in some hotel — the Star and Garter if you like — and lunch and dine together; make up your mind and you are sure to win her"; with feminine malice she added, "she's only waiting to be persuaded."

Gerald went from her in a fever, resolute but still self-deceiving; he would not look facts in the face. But still, there could be no harm, he said to himself, in taking Chrissie out, and he engaged a private room and induced Chrissie to come with him alone.

They lunched together — he in a fever of excitement, Chrissie a little subdued and not quite at ease, but intensely happy. There was something thrilling to both of them in being alone together. He took delight in helping her to this and that, and then the joy of jumping up and kissing her while the waiter was out of the room; and afterwards, when the waiter had cleared away and left them, she kissed him, too, bravely, again and again, and Gerald took his love in his arms and they sat together for hours, almost without speaking, shut off from the world in the divine intimacy of passion. Gradually the dusky shadows crept in and filled the room and hid them from sight or sound, they two together, mouth on mouth, till the girl, too, gave herself wholly to love, and the dark eyes fluttered and lost themselves. . . .

A week later they were in Paris.

Although she expected the news, Mrs. Leighton took it badly; she spent the day given over to all the torments of jealousy: she cried with rage, and dried her tears in hot contempt of her rival; she burned and throbbed with desire, and cooled to frigid resolve and hate; at dinner she could not eat, complaining still of headache — it was heartache she felt, pain that gripped her heart and almost choked her.

That he should prefer that vulgar, shallow little slut to her; that he was kissing her now and happy with her! — Good God! . . .

Next morning she went off to find Doris, determined to win her as she had won Gerald's father. "With the two highest trumps in my hand," she thought, "I can do as I like."

She found Doris horrified and indignant, but she soon calmed her down, persuading her gradually that nothing need get about — "No one need know if we don't tell."

In a few days she had overcome all Doris's suspiciousness. She was not in a hurry. There was time enough. Gerald should have his honeymoon. She would not be surprised, she said to herself, if the honeymoon was quite long enough for him. She knew men pretty well, and her understanding of Gerald was uncanny. Meanwhile she had Doris to lunch and Doris to dinner, and bit by bit won the girl's complete confidence. When she told Doris she was much prettier than her sister, and must make a really sensible marriage with a good, steady man, Doris felt that at last she had met a real friend. Doris quickly came to admire Mrs. Leighton as a sort of model, for the two had a good deal in common. Mrs. Leighton knew the very moment when Doris turned from doubt of her to admiration, and

then it was an easy matter to persuade her that it was her duty to go to Paris and put an end to the scandal by getting her sister to leave Gerald. By this time, too, Mrs. Leighton had worked up old Mr. Lawrence to go with her and help to bring the runaways to reason. Naturally she kept Mr. Lawrence and Doris steadily apart. It would never do to let them know each other, she felt; they were both of the same class, and like might recognise like. Besides, by keeping them apart she could use Doris as a whip to old Mr. Lawrence, and Mr. Lawrence as a bogey with which to frighten Doris. She really played her game with considerable ingenuity, served by jealous feminine instinct and by an unveiled understanding of both the physical and spiritual sides of the problem.

In a month, as Mrs. Leighton had foreseen, Gerald's passion had died of satiety; long before the month had come to an end, indeed, his physical weakness and Chrissie's natural tenderness had brought him almost to illness, his worn-out nerves vibrating between exhaustion and exasperation. In this state every little common phrase of Chrissie's jarred on him, her childishness seemed silly, her longings for her sister sentimental drivel. He soon felt that Mrs. Leighton had read the girl aright:

she was shallow and ill-regulated — all in extremes. The truth was, his physical weakness rendered him incapable of making any allowance for Chrissie after the first few days, and he had no idea how lonely and disconsolate, how homesick and heartsick, she became in the foreign capital. Chrissie was hardly more than a child — a gregarious, ingenuous, vain, charming little creature who lived on praise and hopes of pleasure. When her sister didn't want to talk, she talked to the landlady or to the servant; there was constant companionship for her in Hackney. Here in Paris there was no one to talk to, no one to admire her, nothing on earth to do. In three days she began to be bored, and every effort she made to win Gerald seemed to result in failure. After the first week he hardly wanted to speak to her; she had no understanding of him at all; she was hurt, and then indignant. She began to notice his faults and became increasingly dissatisfied: he was always polite, but he did nothing but read and read, and whenever they went out he took her to churches and picture galleries and museums where she could only see old frumps and fogeys. She was like a young bird used to sunshine and gay, quick flirts of flight and snatches of song, thrust to solitary quiet in a gloomy cage; for to her the

vast hotel was a cage or a prison. If that was love she hated it. All the little differences of sex and temperament brought her to tears. Gerald seemed to get tired of her petting and caressing and loving; she could only believe he was getting tired of her. When she thought of a new way of amusing him by coming behind him in a new dress and blindfolding him, he got cross and cold, and never noticed the dress. From the beginning she had regretted yielding to him without marriage, and every day she regretted it more; it seemed wrong to her to be living with him. She hadn't wanted to leave her sister, and now she wanted to see her more and more till she ached with the longing.

One afternoon Doris walked into her bedroom, and Chrissie threw herself into her arms and burst into inarticulate sobbings of regret and relief. For over an hour Doris could do nothing but kiss and comfort her: "Everything would come right, everything; she must be sure of that. She would not leave her again . . ." for Chrissie seemed heartbroken, and clung to her as if afraid. She never even noticed Gerald's absence, never knew that he had gone to call on Mrs. Leighton in answer to a telegram; Doris was everything to her.

Doris's rage against Gerald, which unconsciously had a tincture of sex jealousy in it,

grew to cold hatred as she realised how unhappy her little sister had been. She had always been a little envious of Chrissie, for Chrissie had outshone her as a dancer by dint of a little more courage in displaying her feelings, and now she realised with a certain satisfaction that it was this thoughtless courage which had brought Chrissie to grief. But the recognition of her own superiority of nature only made her more pitiful to her little sister. So she comforted Chrissie, assured her that everything would be all right; she mustn't worry, everything would be arranged.

"He's not been unkind to you, has he?" she asked.

"No," sobbed Chrissie, "not exactly unkind, but men are so different from what I thought, so different. He's all the time reading and teaching me, and I don't want to be improved. He didn't want me to write to you till I could write without making mistakes, as if that mattered. He's nice, but he's a fool." "Prig" was probably the word she would have used if she had known it. Her little vanity had resented the teacher's attitude which Gerald assumed all too easily. Her resentment seemed inexplicable even to herself; for at bottom she was loyal.

"He's good, you know," she explained, "and

I think, perhaps, he loves me in his way; but men are so different from us, so different," and she clung to her sister in an April storm of smiling and sobbing — heart at ease, at last, in that custom of affection which means so much to women. While comforting her sister, Doris did not lose sight of her mission.

"You must leave him, Chrissie," she said at length; "it's wrong to live like this without being married."

"He'll marry me," replied Chrissie in astonishment, drawing away, "he said he would."

"How can he without money!" replied Doris, coached by Mrs. Leighton. "His father is furious, and won't give him a penny unless he leaves you."

"But he can't leave me," cried Chrissie, horror-stricken; "he promised, and where could I go? I could never show my face again. Oh!" and she blanched with a thousand fears.

"We'll make it all right, dear," comforted Doris, "no one need ever know, and I'll never leave you again, and you must never leave me, you naughty, naughty, little sis to run away and never say a word."

"He wouldn't let me tell you. I wanted to," cried Chrissie, always repentant on this score. "I really wanted to; you must believe me."

And Doris did believe her, and soon managed to find out that there was no new reason why her sister should not leave Gerald. As soon as she was assured of this, she immediately adopted Mrs. Leighton's view that five pounds a week for life was a very good substitute indeed for a man who would always be ashamed of one, and who had been unkind even on the honeymoon. Besides, Mrs. Leighton was right. Chrissie was too young to be married; the elder sister should marry first.

Doris returned to Mrs. Leighton to tell her that Gerald had "behaved shameful" to Chrissie and that if she could have her sister to herself for a day or two, she'd get Chrissie reconciled to leaving him. Mrs. Leighton must keep Gerald away for a little while.

Gerald found Mrs. Leighton in an attitude of resigned sorrow; she even blamed him a little:

"You've hurt your father, Gerald," she said, "and I think you ought to be kind to him."

In some confusion, for he was not prepared for this condemnation from his confederate, Gerald promised to be nice, but —

Mrs. Leighton left the room, and his father came to him. Mr. Lawrence had been well schooled; he acted the heavy father to the life. "Enough of this fooling," was about all he

could find to say. "You've had your fling, and now it's all over. You look shocking bad, Gerald," he added in his natural kindly way.

"I'm going to marry Chrissie," said Gerald with quiet firmness.

"You're mad; you'd never be such a fool," roared the old man, his real opinions breaking through the veneer of custom. "What can the girl do for you?" And then, bethinking himself of the argument supplied to him: "If you do marry her, you'll not get a penny of my money, I can tell you. I won't be a party to such folly. You must be a softie to talk such nonsense. I've no patience with you."

Mrs. Leighton had to appear to prevent them quarrelling, but his father's angry outburst had its effect on Gerald. Mrs. Leighton managed to persuade him not to go back to his hotel that night. "You'll only meet Doris," she said, "and she's furious with you. There'll be a scene if you two meet."

But, in spite of Gerald's hatred of a scene, he utterly refused to leave Paris without first seeing Chrissie, and getting his dismissal from her own lips.

"If Chrissie doesn't want me, I'll do whatever you like," was his final word.

Underneath his disillusion and weakness there was a small fount of passionate tender-

ness. If Chrissie was, indeed, tired of him, he'd go; otherwise nothing would induce him to leave her. His father might do what he pleased with his money. Mrs. Leighton was astonished at his obstinacy. 'Twas Doris saved the situation. She told Mrs. Leighton that in another twenty-four hours she'd answer for Chrissie, and she got the time she wanted.

The pair met in the presence of Mrs. Leighton and Doris.

"Do you want to leave me, Chrissie?" cried Gerald, holding out his hands to her.

"What can I do?" she replied. "Your father won't give you anything, and he hates me and you — you —" and she burst into tears and fell into her sister's arms.

"Don't you think you've done her enough harm?" barked Doris savagely, and in despair Gerald obeyed Mrs. Leighton's gesture and left the room.

"He never even kissed me," wept Chrissie.

"We're well rid of him," snapped Doris viciously; "he cares for no one much, not even for himself."

And so Mrs. Leighton had her way, and took a very sulky, hurt and subdued Gerald back to London with his father, while the sisters Weldon drifted out again into their own world under improved conditions. For despite what

romantic authors may say, such wounds as Chrissie's heal quickly in healthy flesh.

But though Mrs. Leighton had got her way, she was far too clever to try to reap the reward at once. Besides she was a little annoyed and hurt with Gerald for the struggle he had cost her and the trouble he had put her to. She shut herself up in her house in Wilton Place, and gave out that she was not well enough to receive. But the separation was short. Gerald was more unable than ever to endure loneliness; he needed sympathy and praise; in fact, he missed Mrs. Leighton now from morning till night, he simply could not do without her. And she could not resist his importunity.

For a long time he seemed emptied of ambition, the spring of life broken in him. Mrs. Leighton soon noticed the listlessness, but hoped to bring him back quickly to his old self. For some months, however, her hopes were in vain, and the reason lay beyond her fathoming. The truth is, whenever he got a little strength, thoughts of Chrissie came to him; tender memories of their life together in Paris — that life which had seemed so full of disappointments at the time, but which now had become charming and beautiful to him in retrospect. All the little disagreements and pains dropped out of his mind, and he only

remembered the exquisite moments of joy and tenderness. At such times his whole being was given over to love of Chrissie, and to regret that he had ever left her. Since she had faded out of his life, he realised that no one would ever delight him as she had delighted him. Existence seemed dull and futile, stale to loathing. In vain he fasted; in vain he read for twelve or fourteen hours a day; he could only tire himself; and as soon as he was rested, the memory of Chrissie came back to him to torment him, and to make of all the best moments of his life one passionate regret. During the day he could at least struggle with the obsession, or even forget it over a book, or in talk; but at night he was defenceless, and memories of her child-love and pretty caresses broke his sleep. As he was unable to banish the vivid dreams by any effort of will, he held himself guiltless in regard to them, and, with the casuistry of desire, soon went further. He accustomed himself to think of Chrissie just before going to sleep, a habit which he soon found made dreaming of her almost a certainty. The self-indulgence soon began to tell on his health, and so, as time went on, he did not get stronger, but weaker. His father could not make out what was the matter with him; he lost all patience with his moping as he called it.

Mrs. Leighton, with her feminine intuition, had a clearer idea of Gerald's suffering and the necessary remedy.

One day Mr. Lawrence had been complaining that Gerald seemed to be growing weaker, and Mrs. Leighton told him plainly that Gerald was killing himself, and that there was only one way to save him. He understood her, and begged her to take Gerald in hand without delay. A little while after they were engaged, and Mrs. Leighton set herself to fight the memory of Chrissie as she had fought and beaten Chrissie herself. But she found the memory and aura of the girl formidable antagonists. Still she struggled on with tenacity and ability.

She got Gerald ordained as a priest with great ceremony. She arranged an invitation for him to preach his first sermon in one of the most important London churches, and she took care that the church should be filled with a very select audience. She advised him about his sermon, and made him rehearse it again and again to her till every effect was perfect. His first appearance in London as a preacher was a social event. He had brought with him from Oxford a great reputation, and the couple of years in which people had lost sight of him only added to their eagerness to see whether he had fulfilled his youthful promise.

In the interval, too, Lord Woodstock had become a prominent politician, and already a good many Conservatives looked upon him as the coming leader of the party. Woodstock's high opinion of the "Saint" was of itself sufficient to have filled the church, but there were other influences at work.

Gerald was what is called "High Church." In all cases of doubt he turned to the practices of the early Christians, and accordingly was supported by this militant section of the Church.

He chose his text from the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians. He read the sentences out in the toneless, impressive way already described: "*The enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction . . . whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . .*"

Again and again he repeated the text: "*The enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction . . . whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . .*"

The most original thing in the sermon was the way he dwelt on the necessity of fasting and the benefits to be derived from it. "Fasting," he said, "had gradually grown into a rule and become a part of the discipline of the Catholic Church. Why? Because of the virtue in it: because of its good effects. . . . The

whole world was being ransacked to-day to satisfy the desires of the rich of our great cities. Birds were brought from Asia, meat from New Zealand, fish from the northern oceans, fruits from the uttermost parts of the earth, wines were grown with such care that every leaf was cleansed and cherished, and yet Paul asserted that those *'whose God is their belly . . . who mind earthly things . . . are the enemies of the cross . . . doomed to destruction . . .'*"

The earthly custom was to pamper the appetite, the Christian rule was abstinence. He declared that those who had not undergone the discipline were incapable of the highest thought — they were enemies of perfection. Perfect health, he asserted, could only be found by fasting regularly. It was one of the means to perfectness. . . .

This contradiction between the earthly custom and the heavenly rule offered an easy test of the truth of the Christian doctrine. No doctor would ever tell you to fast. He would tell you to eat and drink moderately. That was the Pagan idea of virtue — Aristotle's idea. The wise of this world would regard fasting as an extreme, as they regarded gluttony as an extreme; virtue was in moderation. This was as far as the wisdom of the world went, but the wisdom of the Cross went further — it went to

an extreme, it promised a more perfect health to those who denied themselves and fasted.

"It is within the reach of everyone to find out for himself or for herself," he said, "whether the discipline of the Church is good or bad. It is an easy thing to fast for one day. Everyone in this church, everyone now listening to me, should fast this coming Friday, and on Saturday you will all know whether the words of my text come from God or not. You will then find out whether those who 'mind earthly things' are indeed vowed to success, as most people imagine; or to 'destruction,' as St. Paul asserted . . ."

The sermon was an unexpected success even among men who cared little for the spirituality of the preacher's appearance. Was fasting, indeed, a means of perfection, they wondered. It was a new idea to them. Here Gerald had really preached new words, for he had new knowledge, new personal experience to back him.

After the sermon Woodstock accompanied Gerald to lunch at Mrs. Leighton's. He called Gerald the "Saint"; told him he must be careful not to fast too much; admitted that he himself was beginning to get stout since he had dropped all exercise. "In fact, I'm going to try Gerald's remedy," he added laughingly.

At the end of the meal he told Gerald very quietly that he would do anything to help him at any time.

"I don't want to be included among the enemies," he added, "even if I do mind earthly things."

Though Mrs. Leighton took care that Gerald should hear all the praise his sermon called forth, his success did not inspire the preacher as she had hoped. He soon dropped back into listless regret, into a sort of melancholy brooding. Mrs. Leighton realised that something would have to be done at once — she married him. . . .

At first the experiment seemed to be an utter failure. Gerald got worse instead of better; he began to cough, and alarmed her about his health. She took him to the Riviera without result. The gaiety and distractions of Nice and Monte Carlo only left him more and more listless and tired. After a great deal of thought she resolved to take him to the Holy Land.

It says much for her unselfishness and real kindness of nature that she passed two years with him in Palestine and the Near East without complaining of the many hardships, or even regretting London society, and at length she had her reward, such as it was.

In the course of the first winter spent in

Palestine, Gerald began to get interested in the spirit of Christianity. The creed had something in it which suited his nature; its lessons of humility and loving sympathy appealed to him, just as the self-renunciations of the Church had appealed to him. He encouraged himself in the belief that he, too, had been "called and chosen."

While living in Jersualem, and visiting Bethle-hem, and Capernaum, and Gennesaret, and all the other sacred places, and steeping himself in the Epistles, Gerald began to feel the stirrings of a new ambition; might not he, too, "conquer through his own weakness?" as St. Paul had done.

After he had exhausted the Holy Land, he determined to follow the journeyings of St. Paul in a small sailing ship; he even stopped at all the places where the great Apostle had stopped, and thus, after many experiences, came in spring-time by way of Naples to Rome.

His spiritual history all the while was intimately affected by his bodily health. As ambition awoke in him and his life grew more attractive, he dreamed less, and as the spiritual ideal grew stronger, the image of Chrissie gradually dwined away. For the first couple of years of married life his relations with his

wife had been platonic. He now began to be troubled about his behaviour to her; perhaps he had done wrong.

In the great church dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, outside the walls of Rome, he was vouchsafed new spiritual guidance, and underwent what he always afterwards regarded as his "consecration."

To him the place was sacred; the very road beyond the walls was the road trodden by the indomitable missionary — "*persecuted but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed.*" He walked along it as he imagined the two Apostles had walked together; he stopped where tradition says they stopped, and in the great church at eventide he knelt and prayed. Suddenly he realised that the past was past, that he must begin a new life. The vision of "what is perfect" overpowered him, and the relief he felt in the new decision was evidence to him of heavenly interposition and leading.

He went back to his wife in the hotel, and took her in his arms and kissed her: "'I was blind, and now I see,' dear," he said to her, and she was content to take it at that.

When they returned to England Gerald felt his path straight before him; the taproots of his success would be his own personal experiences. The passion which had almost wrecked

his life, which had brought him to misery, he would preach against, as St. Paul had preached against it. Fasting had given him new ideas and renewed health, had taught him that renunciation was a step to perfection, and it never occurred to him that what was evil to him might be good to a stronger man. He would advocate two of St. Francis' three vows — poverty, which really meant fasting and chastity.

In the brutal materialism and mawkish sentimentality of London his preaching had an extraordinary effect. His special knowledge of the Holy Land helped him to vivify every sermon. He was made a Canon of Westminster, and as he only preached three or four times a year on account of weak health, his sermons soon became social functions.

Ten years later he was made a bishop, and Woodstock brought half a dozen of his colleagues, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, to hear his first sermon.

Ever since his return to England Gerald had led a life of persistent self-denial by night and by day; for years he had eaten no meat, and drunk nothing but water; he had tried to reach the Christian ideal. He had been helped by his weaknesses rather than by his endowments; as far as he could go, he had gone. He

had aged twenty years in the last ten, and at thirty-six was already an old man. His hair was silver-white, the flame of life burned low in him, his self-denying asceticism had brought him to the edge of things where one looks into the void and shudders at the ghostly air. All this spiritualised his appearance and intensified the power of his preaching. Our souls get subdued to the stuff we work in, and Gerald's whole nature now for years and years had been steeped in self-renunciation, gentleness and spiritual aspiration.

The great abbey was full of distinguished people; such an audience had rarely been brought together. As usual, Gerald had prepared every word. He had chosen his text with extreme care. He had taken it from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians: "*If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.*"

The Archbishop, a stout, healthy, thrusting prelate and man of the world, had a good-natured contempt for Gerald, and had come to the service in a spirit of utter disbelief in his saintliness; but he could not prevent a thrill of emotion and wonderment as Gerald rose in the pulpit and looked out over the congregation. His silver hair, refined, thin features and great eyes had their accustomed effect: his voice

was so toneless that it had no individuality, it seemed superhuman, so to speak, in its impersonal monotony:

"If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities"—again and again Gerald let the text sink in.

The long pauses were partly due to physical weakness, partly to the fact that on this day of days he was resolved to follow the example of Paul himself, and to glory in the confession of his own shortcomings. He told how he used to eat and drink and mind earthly things, and how fasting had led him to the upward path. He told, too, with many breaks in his utterance of the temptations of passion, the humiliations it entailed, its bitter disappointments; he spoke with a dying fall in his voice of its transitoriness, its fleeting summer, its haunting remorse; the only consolation was that it pointed to higher things, as shadows all point to the sun.

The latter part of the sermon had no sequence in it. Gerald had yielded to his emotion while controlling its expression, and the effort had exhausted him. In the hush of reverent sympathy fragments of loved texts fell from his lips. He desired, he said, to look not at *the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are tem-*

poral: but the things which are not seen are eternal."

After another pause, the slow words fell one by one on the breathless silence:

"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you," and then the voice died away and the preacher's head drooped forward on the desk — he had fainted.

The effect on the audience was extraordinary; women sobbed aloud, and men unused to weeping had to sniff and cough.

They carried Gerald to the sacristy. The Archbishop and Woodstock stood about while his wife tended him. As soon as he was able to sit up he was full of apologies.

"I am so sorry," he said. "I am afraid I should not have attempted it; my weakness is too great."

They encouraged him, but his eyes closed in another syncope. At his wife's suggestion the two went away leaving him to her.

"I think I was right," said Woodstock to the Archbishop, "to speak of Gerald Lawrence as a saint."

The Archbishop sniffed; though there was not much thought in him there was a considerable knowledge of life and a very rank scepticism:

"Humph! H'm!" he grunted. "His spirit-

uality seemed to me to be of fasting and not of faith; but I daresay he's a good man"; and then, thinking of Gerald's pathetic attempt to smile in the sacristy, he added: "Perhaps he's as near a saint as we're likely to see."

MR. JACOB'S PHILOSOPHY

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. . .

THE first time I met him was in the train going from the Riviera to Paris. He got in at Avignon and was put into my *coupé*. As it was a large one with four berths I didn't much mind, but when I saw he was a Jew I felt inclined to curse. Not that I have any reason to dislike Jews; but they generally look greasy, and I have an idea that they don't like cold water. Still, this one was fairly presentable: a short, stout, little man, somewhere in the fifties, I should say, with the heavy beaked nose and pendulous jowl of his tribe. He was well dressed in dark blue serge, though the pearl watch-chain was perhaps a little loud, and the diamond ring went badly with finger-nails in mourning.

I saw at once that he wanted to talk, and as I had read till my eyes ached and become somewhat bored with my own company and the enforced idleness, I rather encouraged him at first, and in a little while took a certain interest in the man and his talk. He had scarcely settled himself in his seat before he began:

his name, he told me, was Jacob, Israel Jacob, and he was born in Lemburg: he need not have been so precise; his accent was unmistakable. He had spent a night in Avignon — “a stupid hole” he thought it, where he usually broke his journey to Paris; and at length, warmed by the sound of his own voice, he plucked up courage enough to ask where I had come from, and when I answered “Nice,” he confided to me that “Monte,” as he called it, was the only place on the Riviera he cared for.

“A shplendid hotel de ‘Paris’ — de best in all Europe,” and he smacked his thick lips, while his eyes shone with delighted memories. Mr. Jacob enjoyed the good things of this world, it appeared, and knew a good deal about them too; for when I praised his cigars, more for something to say than for any other reason, he insisted that I should try one, and I found it about the best I had ever smoked.

“De ’96 crop,” he said, “but ach, only pritty goot; dere is no cigars now like vot dere vos dirty years ago; dey shpoiled tobacco in Cuba by manuring the ground, and dey haf nefer had any fine shtuff since.”

The old fellow amused me: he was apparently a competent judge of some things and intensely cock-sure; but his self-indulgence had not impaired his brains or his health to all seeming;

for though stout he was not fat, and evidently varied the fleshpots of France with the waters of Carlsbad.

As he talked of Monte Carlo he soon showed that he knew, at least by sight, the most notorious inhabitants and visitors. I say "notorious," because he said but little of the men of rank or position. At first that puzzled me, till I came to understand that he judged all men by the money they possessed. His admiration for Arthur Rothschild was only equalled by his reverence for Camille Blanc, and a cursory view of Mr. Alfred Beit going into the rooms seemed to have become a precious and abiding memory to him. One often hears that a Jew loves money, but I always thought that meant that he loves what money buys, till I met Mr. Jacob. I had no conception that money could be loved for itself alone — adored as a sort of deity; yet no one ever spoke of his god with more sincere reverence than Mr. Jacob spoke of a million. I don't think he meant to show this impersonal passion for money; it simply leaked out of him unconsciously, and I humoured him a little, for he had begun to interest me as a new type.

The only time he showed any irritation was when I made some mistake in my estimate of a man's wealth. In answer to something he

had said, I had remarked carelessly that I supposed Baron Hirsch was the richest man in London; but he would not have it at all.

"Vot, him!" he cried, starting bolt upright on his seat, "he hadn't ten millions: Beit has got twenty, and Astor, dirty, perhaps more: all Jews, dank Himmel!"

"But surely Astor is an American?"

"American," he retorted, "as much American as I am. Yacob was de grandfatter's name who made de money, a German Jew, from Hesse-Cassel. Dat's vy dey got de money; dat's vy dey've kept it."

"But is Rockefeller," I asked, "also a Jew?"

"Of course," replied Mr. Jacob; "no one gets dirty, forty, hundert million who isn't a Jew."

"How extraordinary," I exclaimed, "that all the richest men in the world should be Jews. How do you explain it?"

"Vell," he said, after a pause, "some explain it in von vay and some in anoder. Generally ve zay dat de Jew haf de best brains in de world."

"But if they are so clever," I replied, "surely they would show their genius in other departments of life."

"Dey do," he said; "take acting: Irving is

a Jew, Beerbohm Tree a Jew, Alexander a Jew, Lewis Waller a Jew — all Jews.”

“Perhaps that is why,” I interjected, “the stage in England is in such a wretched condition.” But he did not heed or even hear the gibe.

“Same ting in Germany,” he went on; “all de great artists are Jews.”

“But, after all,” I objected, “acting is only half an art.”

“And music, dat is an art,” he cried, “eh? and all de musicians are Jews: Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn — Rubenstein.”

“Really,” I questioned, “I never heard that Von Beethoven and Mozart were Jews.”

“Yes, Jews,” he retorted, “all Jews, and Liszt, too.”

“I’ll admit,” I replied, “that there are a good many actors and musicians Jews, but it is in getting riches that they shine, and I can’t see why they should have the monopoly of that talent.”

“Vell,” remarked Mr. Jacob, meditatively, “Jews say dat dey vere kept under for centuries, treated like dogs, and not allowed to enter de professions, and so dey became money-lenders; but I don’t believe dat: dey haf always been de same, from Jacob de patriarch in de Bible to me; dey always loved money,

and always vere hated because dey got it. But in de past, de oder peoples used brute force against 'em, and robbed 'em; while to-day, in de reign of law, you can't do dat and so de Jew haf become master; he makes war and peace; governments and kings bow down to him. Rothschild and Beit in London, Rothschild in Paris and Frankfort, Bleichroeder in Berlin, Astor and Rockefeller in New York — everyvere de Jew is master. And in anoder hundred years you vill see vonders: you vill all be serfants of de Jew, or his slaves. Alretty he own all de papers: in Berlin all; in Paris all; in London most of 'em. You vait and see. Who made de war in Sout Africa; de papers in Johannesburg and Cape Town, eh? all owned by Jews, all. Ach, you vait. Who make dis war? De Jew, eh? He hate de Russian. Ach, you vait and see."

With his bald pate and beaked nose he looked more like an old bird of prey than ever, as he pecked and flapped about in his excitement.

"That may all be," I yawned; "but what puzzles me is, how the Jews make all the money."

"Make," he cried, "de Jews don't make money, my frient; dey get it; vot you tink?" and he leered significantly.

About this time we were called to dinner

and I was rather glad of it. Mr. Jacob tired me a little; he saw Jews everywhere; and his eulogy of their wealth and power bored me. Still his last phrase stuck in my memory, I don't know why, and I often recalled it later: "Jews don't make money: they get it."

After dinner we returned to the *coupé*, and again Mr. Jacob would have me smoke one of his excellent cigars, and again I had to yield, for he would take no denial; but I was not inclined to talk any more, and so I moved about the corridor, and got out at every station in order to stretch myself a little before bedtime. When I returned finally Mr. Jacob was sleeping, and I soon followed his example.

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The next time I met him was in a Pullman going from Brighton to London, a couple of years later. He appeared overjoyed at seeing me, shook my hand warmly, produced an immense cigar and pressed it upon me, and insisted that I should come to lunch with him in his bachelor "tiggings." For once in a way I had no engagement, and had thought of lunching at the club, and so I found myself accepting Mr. Jacob's invitation. We got out at Victoria and drove to Piccadilly, where he had a flat on the first floor opposite the Green Park. I

had always understood that Mr. Jacob was rich, though he did not brag about it; I felt sure, too, that he knew what good food was; but I was not prepared for the curiously fine taste shown in his apartments. In the drawing-room overlooking the Park all the furniture was old French, and the pieces looked like show-pieces, and were from the hands of the masters, I felt sure. The only fault I could find was that a table and a cabinet were too large for the room, and seemed to dwarf it. The pictures were magnificent — Israels, Daubignys, and Manets that must have cost a pretty penny, and a fine Ziem lit up a dark corner with the opal waterways and magic amber lights of a sunset in Venice. But the pictures were not the only things which stirred my envy and wonder. Two Chippendale vases were on brackets by the windows, as beautiful in outline as the best Greek work, and there were early Italian bronzes scattered all over the place, which showed the art from root to flower. The room was more like a museum than an ordinary living room, and when we went into the dining-room at the back I was even more astonished. It was panelled in squares of old oak set diamond-wise with finely carved heads at all the points, and every panel was chosen for its flower; he had got it from a manor house in Suffolk, he

said carelessly; and he had set off the dark wood with old German brasses and Chinese vases of hawthorn and powdered blue, so that the colour-scheme sang to the eye. Over the mantel-piece was a carved oak altar-screen of the fifteenth century, decidedly out of place, I thought, but in itself superb and full of interest. The table was a long, narrow, Renaissance table, and all the silver on it was of the time of Queen Anne. Clearly my friend, Mr. Jacob, had an uncommon knowledge of many arts, and knew exactly what to buy. He gave me an excellent lunch and followed it up with such coffee and cognac as one seldom gets in this imperfect world.

I had lunched so well and felt so comfortable, that my gratitude awoke, and I thought the least I could do was to humour my host's foible, and so, when we returned to the big room overlooking the Green Park, I began:

"Do you remember, when we first met, telling me that Jews get money, and do not make it? That phrase of yours stuck in my head, and I often thought that if we ever met again I'd ask you just what you meant by it."

His eyes narrowed in a cautious, cunning way as I spoke, but vanity and volubility conquered.

"Money takes too long to make," he replied, "it's easier to get: see?"

I confessed that I did not quite see.

"Haf you never dought," he began, "who it is vins most pritty girls in life? Not the handsomest man, eh? nor the strongest; nor even the richest; but de man who goes after 'em most, who desires 'em most, eh? no?"

"By Jove!" I cried, "perhaps you're right."

"Of course I'm right," he went on, "and it is de same ting mit money. It is not de man mit de best brains, nor de man mit de greatest resolution, vat you call character, but de man who most desires it who gets money — de greediest man. Haf you never noticed dat de millionaire hate to pay for a cab or a dinner: he loves de touch of gold: he hates 'parting.' Dat is vy," he remarked to himself, "dat cheques are so bad: it is easy to write a cheque: one does not feel de money," and he rubbed his thumb and finger together as if he were handling a coin, while his eyes gleamed with a pleasure and passion that were sensuous in intensity.

"The Jew, then, makes money," I said, lazily sipping my Mocha, "because he wants it more than other men, is greedier than they are."

"Makes!" exclaimed Jacob, "makes nodings; one can make a million; but not ten, twenty millions; de Jew gets money, I tell you, gets it from oders; you, me, anyone. Only de fool makes money."

"I remember," I cried, "how stupid of me, of course he does not make it. But now you have told me why the Jew gets money, but not how he gets it."

"Dat is anoder matter," smiled Jacob, "but vays and means come from de desire. Haf you efer dought, my frient, vy de Jew sells old clo's, old umbrellas, eh? He always begin by selling old tings, not new vuns. Vy? I tell you. Because de new tings have a price. Vun knows vot a new umbrella costs, eh? If it is cotton, so much, silk, so much, eh? Say a silk umbrella cost ten shilling, you cannot ask more dan fifteen for it, can you? or a pound at most. De value is too well known: de same mit a suit of new clo'es. If it is new, it costs two or tree poun'; you can sell it for tree or four, no more": and he spread his hands in contempt. "De value is too vell known.

"But ven it is old clo's," he resumed, "you may buy de suit for two shillin', and may sell it for two, tree poun': not? *

"De Jew always buy vot haf no settled value; he begin mit old clo's, because dey's cheap; or

old umbrellas, very little money needed; and he sell 'em to de need of de customer. He make profit, not twenty or dirty per cent., as he would make with new clo's, but hunderts, tousends per cent.; dat is how he get rich; vot you tink; eh?" and his eyes glistened.

I noticed that as he warmed up and got excited his accent became worse and worse, and his speech more ungrammatical.

"Den de Jew gets on and deals in old furniture, vorks of art, pictures, china, bronzes, tapestry, curtains, brasses, marbles — everything vot is old: always vot has no settled value. He haf got a clock dere, eh? Made about 1770 or 1780. He buy it at a sale in de country; no bidders, he pay for it perhaps two poun'; mit his railway fare and commission, it cost him tree about: vell, he keep it, people admire it much: he vait . . .

"Von day some one come in who knows, and say: 'Fine clock dat, might have belonged to Marie Antoinette; I gif you ten poun' for it.' He say 'No tank you.' Anoder day he haf goot customer, who admire ze clock; 'Vot will you take for it, Yacob?'

"He say, 'I don't know; dat belong to Marie Antoinette, dat clock; it is perfect specimen; look at it, beautiful clock, historical clock.'

“‘Yes, Yacob,’ say de customer, ‘but vot do you vant for it?’

“I say, ‘I don’t like to part mit it, beautiful clock; it please me so to see it dere; it’s vort hunderts of poun’,’ and I vatch him. If he say noding I know I may go up still more; ‘But dere, I am too poor to haf such a clock, cannot afford it — from you I would take, say, eight mal hundert poun’ — it is noding; it is gifen away.’

“He say, ‘Oh, Yacob, dat is too much.’

“‘Vell,’ I say, ‘make me an offer; it is priceless, dat clock of Marie Antoinette — historical clock’; and at last I sell it to him for, perhaps, sefen hundert and fifty poun’. Cost me tree poun’ dat clock. Eh? vot you tink?

“No one make dat profit mit a new clock. De same ting mit pictures, mit everyting dat is old, dat haf no settled value, except de desire of de customer.”

In his excitement the Jew had mimicked the scene with astonishing veracity. No one could have reproduced real life with such fidelity if he hadn’t been painting from memory. In his time Mr. Jacob had sold old furniture and works of art, or I was very much mistaken, and that explained the beautiful things in his rooms. But I wanted to hear more, and so, when he paused, I tried to work him up again.

"But after all, Mr. Jacob," I said, "all Jews don't deal in old umbrellas or old clothes, or old furniture and works of art."

"No," he said, as if to himself, "dey begin mit de old clo's and den dey come to de old furniture and vorks of art: all tings dat haf no settled value, and den —" and his voice grew deep with reverence, "and den, perhaps, dey come to the greatest ting of all, dey come to deal mit money itself, dat has no price: den de Jew begin to get rich — but rich, rich!" and he pursed his lips and nodded his head in ecstasy.

"De nobleman come in; he must haf tousan' poun' at once; he can't vait: he haf promised a necklace to Miss Dolly Price of de Gaiety, and find he haf no money in de bank. Comes to de Jew for de money. De Jew say, 'I haf no such sum, a tousan' poun'; vot you tink! Dat cannot be foun' in a minute, oh no! But by dis evening I might get it; you come back in an hour and see me, I try to get it for you; I do my best.'

"Ven he go away I find out all about him; who he is, his family, frients, everyting: if he is able to pay, or his family able to pay, if he is goot or not. If he is goot, ven he come back I say, 'Vell, I can get dat money, but I am afrait it will be tear; times is very hart.

If I len' you dat money for six monts, it is vort five hundert poun'.' 'Goot Got!' he say, 'a hundred per cent.' I say, 'It is tear, very tear; my lord, you had petter not take it: you don't need to take it, you know; I would rather len' it you for tree mont for tree hundert poun'.'

"Dat seem less to him; he take it for tree mont for tree hundert: I smile. He go away and forget all about it. At de end of tree monts I say, 'Pay, please.'

"He say, 'I cannot pay.' I say, 'Oh!' den I make him pay hundert per cent. a month; eh; vot? I didn't ask him to borrow — eh? not true? He owe it me; 'tis my money."

He spoke as if in defiance, and then suddenly his mood changed to savage exultation.

"Oh, it is a great game, I tell you, de best game in de vorld — to play mit a man for his soul, for his money, and vin it. Ah, vot a game, and de fools go hunting and shooting all ofer de vorld; and I sit in my office, here, quiet, and haf sport, such sport — all kinds of game, little and big, and sport — ach!" and he sighed with memory of exquisite pleasures.

"A voman come in, a lady, she vant money — hundert poun's; her daughter is so pritty: she make good marridge, later; only a little money wanted for dresses and parties. I

sympatize: I understan'. She haf goot house, but small ingome: Florrie is so sweet. Vont I help her? Of gourse I vill. A little bill of sale on de furniture; no fuss; no trouble; and I len' de hundert poun', at fifty per cent. She very gradeful, and tank me, tank me. Ven de time come, she can't pay; but vill pay interest. Out of good nature, I consent, but de interest go up. Next time she can't pay. I am gompelled to be more severe. I vant my money: de interest goes up. Interest always goes up. She pay someting on account. I make perhaps couple of hundert a year out of her. Vot is it? Noding — eh? But leetle fishes are sveet"; and he rubbed his tongue over his red lips and pursed out his mouth, and smiled; I began to understand.

"Or a young man come in. He is in a bank; he tremble and is ill: I soon fint out: he haf taken a little from de cash; he must haf hundert poun' dat night to safe himself from prison. Vell, I am very kind. I am sorry for him. I vill do my best; he must tell me who his fader is, and his uncle, all his relations. I vill see vot I can do: money very tight: he should come back in de afternoon. He come back. But I haf not been able to fint it yet. He must gif me more time. Ven he come back at night he is excited, pale. I say he must sign bill for hundert and

fifty poun': I haf got de money from a frient cheap for him; but my frient must have two names; his fader or his uncle's vill do. Den he get mad; I haf kept him too late; he can't get name now; he haf no time: de poor fool, as if I am dere to give him time. I shrug shoulder: am sorry; vot can I do? Den he cry and look bad. Den I say, 'You vill pay it when it is due, eh?' And he swear he vill. 'Den,' I say, 'if de name of your uncle is on de bill ven I come back, I gif you de money, and I lock de bill in my safe till it is due. Den, if you pay, it is all right, and no one efer know.' I leaf de room, and when I come back, in fife minutes, de uncle's name is on de bill, eh? vot you tink? Den de Jew enjoy his little self; he haf ingome for life; if de man or his relations any goot —" and he smiled.

And as he smiled the room seemed to my excited imagination to fill with ghosts, unhappy spectres, with frightened eyes and quivering white lips, and behind them frenzied shapes of anguish and despair, cursing. . . . To shake off the horror I got up quickly; but Mr. Jacob had forgotten my presence even, for he went on, walking about and occasionally puffing at his cigar.

"Oh yes, 'tis goot to be a money-lender, but better still a banker or a financier. Oh, de

banker; dat is fine; he lend to everyone; he get great profit; and fools lend him deir money for nodings: 'on deposit,' eh? Oh, a bank is goot, very goot." And he mused before he concluded: "De Jew is always vise; he always buy vot haf no settled value, and sell to his customer's need: dat is vy he get rich."

"But when he is rich," I said, knocking off the ash from my cigar, "what does he get out of it? He has spent all his life in getting money, and when he has got it, what then?"

"Vot den?" he repeated, looking at me, "vot den?" and he swelled in his pride, "Vy den he haf everyding in the vorlt dat a man can vant. He lif as he like and vere he like, mitout care or fear; he buy beautiful tings — pictures and silver, and everyone make up to him, everyone praise him, everyone glat to see him: statesmen gonsult mit him; great ladies ask his advice: pretty girls smile, and are kind to him, eh?" and Mr. Jacob leered again abominably: "Ach, my frient, I tell you; he is among men a king, a God. . . ."

THE RING

THE RING

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IN my morning paper there was a paragraph stating that a Chippendale chair at Christy's, had fetched £1,250; the purchaser being Mr. Lewis the well-known dealer of St. James's Street, whom I happened to know. Another paragraph announced that the gem of the famous Salter collection, a Chinese vase of exceptional beauty had fallen to the same bidder for five thousand guineas. To increase the wonder the reporter added that the vase was only eight inches in height and a little chipped.

A day or two later, I happened to be walking down King Street when the awed comments of the journalist came into my head and instinctively I followed some people who were going up the steps into Christy's.

It was an ordinary day in the rooms, and there was the ordinary assembly of forty or fifty rather listless people, and over all, the peculiarly English air of quiet decorum and respectability. It was easy to resolve the crowd into its elements: the majority of the

visitors had evidently wandered in out of mere curiosity without any intention of buying; the little knot of dealers held together, Jews for the most part, of ordinary types; but all quietly dressed, and in spite of a somewhat aggressive bearing, quiet in manner, the place evidently exercising a certain restraint. Sitting a little apart and with her back to me was a lady in black, with a boy of five or six by her side. There was something familiar to me in her appearance; but it was difficult to get a view of her face without obtruding myself on her notice and so I stayed where I was. Among the dealers I soon noticed Lewis: indeed his bold hawk features, fine height and powerful figure, would have made him conspicuous in almost any company. He nodded to me as soon as he saw me, with a friendly smile on the handsome challenging face. His hair was getting thin I noticed, gummy-bags too were showing under the large brown eyes; the chin and jowl had lost their firm outline — “Lewis is ageing,” I said to myself, “suffering from too much prosperity ——”

Meanwhile the sale went on in the quiet casual way that the English have made the accepted manner of gentlefolk throughout the world.

A beautiful Chippendale tray in mahogauy

with a wavy border raised on little pillars, a very beautiful homely thing, at once useful and decorative, delicate yet strong, had just been put up.

"A Chippendale tray," said the auctioneer, "will some one give me a bid to begin with; say, £5?"

"Five shillin'," retorted a voice with a strong German accent.

I noticed that the lady drew the child closer to her as she heard the harsh voice.

"Five shillings; seven; ten; ten shillings," repeated the auctioneer, and then paused.

Instinctively I looked at the lady in black; but she gave no sign.

The auctioneer swept the room with his eyes:

"Only ten shillings: ten shillings for this genuine Chippendale tray"; then (resignedly), "going at ten shillings, going, gone," and the hammer fell.

The lady's head seemed to bend a little. In spite of myself I had begun to be interested. The subdued air, the tone of quiet good manners, the smooth rapidity with which object succeeded object did not deceive me: beneath the surface there was a throbbing of hope and fear, a breathless interest; in fact the strain of life itself caught me, and before I knew it my

heart was beating in excitement and I was all ears, all eyes. . . .

One thing struck me immediately. None of the rich dealers ever asked to have the things shown to them. When a vase was passed from hand to hand, they never glanced at it. Evidently they knew all about the various lots; they had examined them beforehand carefully. I remembered that there is always a preliminary day or two set aside for such examination. It is only the amateur, who wants to look at something at the very moment of the sale, and naturally such a casual person is at a considerable disadvantage.

A good many things like this had become clear to me, when two very beautiful powdered blue vases were put up. I had already noticed that the best things in the collection were Chinese works of art.

I asked for a catalogue, and found that the sale was that of Sir Robert Winthrop. Of course the lady in black was Lady Winthrop whom I had known years before as Mrs. Winthrop. Winthrop, I guessed, had died recently. He had spent twenty or thirty years of his life in China and was supposed to have known a great deal about Chinese art and Chinese customs. I had never been intimate with the Winthrops: one only saw them at long

intervals when they visited London on leave; but Mrs. Winthrop had interested me. In the stagnant leisure of her Chinese life she had given herself to reading English and had a really astonishing knowledge of English literature and in especial of English poetry. I wondered vaguely what she had been reading lately; whether she had been left well off or not, and then what those vases would fetch. . . .

"Thirty pounds, guineas: thirty guineas; no bid beyond thirty guineas, going at thirty guineas; at thirty guineas going, going, gone."

The tap seemed to be a groan. Lady Winthrop half rose; turned and looked a little wildly round the room and then sat down again.

I felt oppressed. "Thirty guineas" for such a pair of vases was absurd. I resolved to bid rather than let the next set go at such an absurd price.

The next lot happened to be another pair of powdered blue vases just as fine as the first pair: they seemed to light up the dull room with a supernal joyous radiance.

"Two beautiful vases," said the auctioneer slowly, "powdered blue, supposed to be unique, gentlemen; you must really begin to bid; what price shall we say, will you give me a lead?" — he seemed to look at Lewis, I thought.

I expected the first bid to be something decent: to my astonishment it was "five pounds." Even the auctioneer seemed loath to begin at such a figure:

"Five pounds is bid," he said, "will no one say fifty pounds?"

The dealers looked boredom at each other: one yawned openly.

"Say fifty," said the auctioneer, but there was no response.

"Five pounds then," he began.

"Fifty," said a gentleman suddenly.

Lady Winthrop, I noticed, half turned her head, as if to see who had spoken.

"Fifty," repeated the auctioneer dispassionately, then more rapidly:

"Sixty; seventy; seventy-five."

"A hundred," interjected the gentleman-bidder.

Lewis who had not seemed interested in the bidding now looked up at the auctioneer.

"Guineas," said the auctioneer in response. "A hundred guineas."

"A hundred and fifty," said the gentleman. At this I noticed that Mr. Lamb the famous dealer of Bond Street, looked at Lewis and nodded; then he detached himself from the group of dealers and moved away as if to leave. In a moment the atmosphere of the room had

reached fever heat: the gentleman was evidently a competitor of importance. When the bidding reached two hundred, he said "three": he was the stoker, so to speak; every big rise was due to him.

At five hundred pounds there was a pause, then a glance of understanding passed between Lewis and the auctioneer, and the price again was guineas: Five hundred and twenty-five. The gentleman made it six hundred, seven hundred again was his bid.

From the beginning the bidding had been irregular, the gentleman jumping to round figures, while Lewis seemed to go up reluctantly by fives. It was a duel between them.

"A thousand pounds," was bid by the gentleman. Again Lewis's eyelids just dropped and the auctioneer immediately said, "One thousand guineas." Without hesitation the gentleman replied with "One thousand one hundred," and in a few minutes the bidding had reached One thousand five hundred, "and five" — was due I was sure, to Lewis.

"Two thousand," said the auctioneer a little later, rolling the thousand unctuously under his tongue: "two thousand," and there was silence in the room. "Two thousand guineas," he went on; it was the gentleman's last bid. Lewis looked up — two thousand one hundred

and five. "Going at two thousand one hundred and five," repeated the auctioneer: "will no one make it two thousand two hundred? No advance on two thousand one hundred and five? Going at two thousand one hundred and five; going, going, gone."

Without a word the next lot was put up, but to my astonishment most of the dealers drew nearer while both Lewis and Lamb prepared to leave.

The scene had interested me intensely. I wanted to see Lady Winthrop, but I could visit her later. The first thing to do was to try to understand the extraordinary discrepancy in the auction price of things. A pair of powdered blue vases had fetched thirty guineas, while another pair hardly to be distinguished from them had fetched two thousand one hundred and five pounds: seventy times as much — the mere fact filled me with wonder, sharpened my curiosity. What could be the explanation of this extravagant difference? I took pains to meet Lewis in the doorway. His greeting was full-voiced and even more cordial than usual.

"Haven't seen you for some time," he said, and he threw to his rival, Lamb, a cheery "Good-day" and a quick glance of understanding. We went down the steps together.

"Won't you come and have a drink," I said, "and explain the auction to me?"

"Not a drink, my boy," he replied. "I'm getting a little stout. My doctor tells me to stop drink. It does me no good in the morning and afternoon. You see I do myself pretty well at lunch and dinner, and don't get as much exercise as I used to."

"Don't you ride in the park, now?" I cried, drawing the bow at a venture.

"No time for it," he said. "I'm beginning to make a little bit now."

I laughed. "Your little bit must be something enormous, for ever since I have known you, and it's twenty years now, you have been making more than a bit."

"I've done pretty well, thank you," he replied, rubbing his hands together. "But I wish I did not get so stout. I've bought a little place in the country and taken up golf. You must come down and see us one day. The Missis would like you to come. She says you play good Bridge. I've enough to do playing in the shop. I like a bit of a stroll when I'm at home."

"Do you go out there every evening?" I asked.

"No, no," he replied, "I'm at Hampstead every evening. I go down to Chobham from

Friday to Monday in the motor. I start about noon, if there's no big sale on. The big 'uns seldom begin before noon." All this while we were walking down towards the famous shop in St. James's Street. When we had come to the door he said:

"Won't you come in and look round? I've got some rather good things since you were here last — miniatures, snuff-boxes? You don't care for miniatures?"

I shook my head. "Was it you," I questioned, "who bought that — Chippendale tray? I should like that."

"Tray?" he said, as if not remembering at once.

"Yes, that pretty Chippendale tray."

"Oh yes," he said, "you can have it if you like, I'll send it to you when I know what it costs."

"It cost you ten shillings," I said

He stopped and looked at me quickly, and then a smile spread over his face and he shook his head:

"That tray is certain to cost me between five and ten pounds and cheap at the price."

"How do you make that out?" I cried. "You got it for ten shillings. I saw you nod to the auctioneer, and yours was the last bid."

"Well, I can only tell you that you shall

have it for what it costs me, if you want it. You can't expect to get it cheaper than that, can you?"

"Certainly not," I answered, "I only want a fair price. And what about that pair of powdered blue vases you got for thirty guineas; I felt very much inclined to bid myself, but I did not want to bid against you."

"It would have done you no good, if you had, nor me any harm," and he laughed loudly.

"What do you mean?" I probed further. "I should like that pair of blue vases, but I suppose they would be beyond my purse?" I added questioning.

"What do you think they're worth?" he asked turning to me.

"I know nothing of the market-value," I replied; "but I thought them a beautiful pair of vases and I'd have given £100 for them very willingly."

"You ought to be in our business," he remarked drily. "I reckon those vases will cost £300 anyway and they'd be cheap at double that price."

"My goodness," I exclaimed, "what profit you'll make. Fancy buying them for thirty guineas!"

"No, no, no," he cried impatiently. "I told you they would cost me £300 not £30 and

probably more than £300. I should not be surprised if they cost me £500 or even £600 if I wanted them, but I don't. They will go to Brown of Bond Street."

"I am entirely at sea," I said. "If a tray which is knocked down to you at ten shillings, costs you five or ten pounds, and a pair of blue vases knocked down to you at thirty guineas are sure to cost you from £300 to £500 and are worth at least £700, I'm at a loss. I do not know what it all means."

"That's just it," he remarked indulgently. "You don't, but if you had these vases at £500 you'd have a bargain. But when are you coming out to Chobham? The little place I've got is just beyond the village."

"I'd be delighted to come next Saturday," I said, "if I may till Monday."

"Come on Friday," he replied cordially, "and I'll motor you down; be here at four o'clock. Then I'll let you know what the tray'll cost you, and the vases too, if you want 'em. I haven't seen as fine a pair these five years. I liked 'em better than the next pair that fetched two thousand odd."

"Wonder on wonder!" I cried. "You must explain it all to me at Chobham."

"Alright," he replied cheerfully, "don't be late."

We parted in all kindness. I have more than respect for Lewis. I like and admire him greatly. Again and again he has given me good advice about the value of things, and he has gone through life as a conqueror. We are friends in the modern meaning of the word and have been ever since we first met. I came across him first in a P and O boat from Australia to London. He was a young man in the steerage. I was struck with his face and resolute cheery manner and got into conversation with him. As a young man he was very handsome. Five feet nine or ten in height, broad shouldered, with eagle nose and bold hazel eyes, and a good-humoured, frank expression of countenance.

Five years later I met him in a little shop in Wardour Street. He had been a cabman, he told me, and had saved a little money and had married a girl he had fallen in love with, and a very pretty girl she was. With her "tocher" he had taken the little shop in Wardour Street, and already he knew more about English furniture of the latter part of the eighteenth century, which was then coming into vogue, and more about Chinese porcelain too, than anyone I've ever met. He had learnt it all, he told me, in the British Museum. He spent all his spare time there and in South Kensington. He

wanted to know all there was to be known about his hobby.

His next translation was to the great shop in St. James's Street and he explained the jump to me in the most natural manner.

"I heard," he said, "that the Thomasson collection was for sale. I got in to see it. Never mind how, but I meant getting in and I succeeded, and I saw every piece of it, and priced them at their lowest. The collection was worth about £80,000 I estimated, and would fetch that under the hammer. Besides it contained the finest Hawthorne vase that had ever been seen in Europe and half-a-dozen other matchless pieces. I had a good customer, Mr. Alfred R——, one of the great banking house. I went to him and told him about the collection, said I thought a bid of £40,000 would buy it. I intended to offer £25,000 if he would let me have the money at five per cent., and if so (and this was the bait) he should have the Hawthorne vase for nothing, and two or three other fine pieces. He told me at once that he would let me have the money. After I had arranged with his lawyer as to the way it should be repaid (of course he was to have full possession of the things till the whole amount of principal and interest was paid off), I went to work. I managed to buy the Thomasson

collection for £27,000 and moved to this shop on the strength of it. I got thirty-five thousand pounds for half the collection within the year, and have never looked back since. I've brought all my brothers up to the trade and set 'em all up in it, and they're all doing well."

The practical ability of the man was manifest — his energy, special knowledge and good-humoured determination, above all his intuitive understanding of men and their desires. I guessed that I should get from Lewis a very complete insight into what had puzzled me at Christy's.

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I met him on the Friday afternoon and he took me in his big Renault through the Surrey lanes to Chobham. I was not surprised to find his place an exceedingly picturesque old English manor house set in some five hundred acres of beautiful park. And the inside of the house surpassed the outside. Every piece of furniture was picked with expert knowledge and taste and every ornament as well. The pictures were few, but good. Yet the house was cosy and nest-like. Mrs. Lewis had grown a little stouter but was still pretty and even more intelligent seemingly than when a girl. The pair had no children, but their mutual

understanding was perfect, their happiness manifest, or at least their self-content. After an excellent dinner I got Lewis by himself in his "den" and brought him to book about the sale.

"I want to know all about it," I said, "and how you explain thirty guineas for one pair of vases and two thousand for another, certainly no better."

"It's the 'Ring,'" he replied, "and I've got into it — that's all!"

"Now what may you mean exactly by the 'Ring'?" I persisted.

"Well," he replied, "it simply means I was rich enough and resolute enough to force my way in. Of course they didn't want me at first: but they had to have me," and he laughed.

"You forget," I cried, "I don't know what the 'Ring' is. Tell me about it: how it came to be and what it does, and then tell me how you got into it."

"The 'Ring' is made up of a dozen or more of the biggest London dealers," he explained. "They bid for all the big things, and sometimes for the little things too; in fact, for whatever they want; but chiefly for the best things.

"If any outsider bids against them, they run the article up to about the shop price of it,

and if he goes to the top price or a bit above it, they let him have it. Generally of course, he is choked off mid-way; the dealers then buy it in. For example Brown or I would have given up to two thousand pounds for the first pair of vases rather than let any outsider have 'em. As no one bid seriously for 'em they were knocked down at thirty guineas, but that's not the price of 'em or the value of 'em even to us."

"What do you mean by the value to you?" I insisted. "Explain yourself."

"Surely it must be clear to you now," he replied. "No? Well. After the sale we dealers meet together and have an auction of our own. For instance the first pair of vases was put up again among ourselves in the 'Ring.' I told you they might fetch anything between three and five hundred pounds. As a matter of fact they fetched six hundred in the 'Ring.' Brown bought them; he first paid me my thirty guineas and then we divided the other five hundred and sixty odd pounds between ourselves in the 'Ring.' Brown has got the vases to sell: they cost him six hundred pounds minus his share of the five hundred and sixty as a member of the 'Ring.' If you want 'em I can get 'em from him at a decent advance, say for seven hundred and fifty or eight hundred pounds, telling him

they are for a special friend of mine. Then they'd be cheap, dirt cheap."

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "the owner then only gets thirty guineas for something which is absolutely worth seven hundred at the lowest."

He nodded smiling.

"But suppose you run it up too high in competition with some amateur: what do you do then?"

"The proceeding is just the same," he replied. "We dealers get together and bid for the thing, and if it fetches less than I paid for it the 'Ring' makes it up to me. As a matter of fact the other pair was taken by Lamb at fifteen hundred and the 'Ring' had to make up a cheque to me for six hundred and five pounds."

"I see," I cried, "I see:—restricted competition among yourselves and a common interest. Do you know, my dear Lewis, your 'Ring' is a sort of ideal society, and if there were any statesmen in England, and not a ghastly crew of self-seeking politicians, your 'Ring' might give the idea of a working model of society in the future. If one could get a sense of the common good into Mr. Balfour's head and a sense of the value of strictly limited competition into Mr. Asquith's, one might

begin to have some hope for the future of England."

"You had better tell 'em that," laughed Lewis. "We find the 'Ring' works alright, thank you."

"But what difference in money does it make to you to be in the 'Ring'?"

"It fluctuates," he answered; "one can't say. I have had some years before I got into the 'Ring' nearly as profitable as the present ones, but now my income is fairly regular — about £40,000 a year, I suppose."

"But being in the 'Ring' has made a difference to you?" I persisted.

"Oh yes," he replied, "an enormous difference in comfort and security. You see the 'Ring' does away with the evils of competition — waste, risk and anxiety."

"How true!" I cried. "What a statesman you are!"

"I was not the inventor of it," he answered frankly, "but I know what it is to be up against it, and what it is to be inside it."

"How did you get inside?" I queried.

"How do you get anything in this world," he cried, "but by fighting for it, eh? You have to fight for everything worth having, and if it does not cost a fight, it is not worth much."

“‘*Tout se paie*’ as Napoleon used to say,” I answered, “everything has to be paid for.”

“That’s it,” he cried, the fine eagle eyes lighting up, ‘everything’: that’s it exactly.”

“Now tell me how you got into the ‘Ring’”: I said stretching myself in the armchair.

“I just made it hot for them,” he answered simply. “Of course I knew Lamb and Levine were the heads of the business, and one day I told them I wanted to be in with them. They smiled at me and pretended not to understand what I meant.

“‘Dere vos no “Ring,”’ said Levine; ‘I vos jokin.’

“I told them I would try and make the joke clear to them in the auction room, and I did make it clear to them, over and over again,” and he laughed heartily.

“But how, how?” I asked.

“Surely you understand?” he wondered.

“No; I want the ‘i’s’ dotted, and the ‘t’s’ crossed.”

“Well you see, I knew Levine’s business and Lamb’s business too, pretty well, knew the sort of things that they had commissions to buy, what they really wanted, and I took care that they paid top price for them. For instance I knew to-day that Lamb wanted that pair of powdered blue vases; before he made

a sign to me. I could guess where they are going: he will get three thousand sovereigns for them from Sir V. M—— Well, then if I had still been outside the ‘Ring,’ I should have run them up to three thousand pounds and then bowed to him and let him have ’em. As it is he can make a thousand pounds clear without any trouble. But if I had run ’em up against him, he would have had to be content probably with the difference between pounds and guineas. He could hardly ask his client four thousand for them, that would be a bit too thick. Well, whenever there was a pet piece he wanted, I made him and Levine go all the way to get it, and sometimes a bit further.” And again the eagle eyes lit up with the fire of combat and victory.

“But surely fighting like that,” I objected, “you must have got hit sometimes. Now and then they must have scored and made you pay high for some things you did not want?”

“Of course,” he rejoined, laughing outright, “of course they did and oftener than I care to remember. You see they are pretty able men both of ’em, with very long purses to boot. . . .

“In the six months the fight went on, I lost something like ten thousand pounds, but each of them lost a bit more than I did, and the

richer a man is, the more he hates to lose any of it. See?" and he twinkled.

"How did the fight come to an end?" I asked.

"One morning," he replied, "I got 'em both, right and left: caught 'em napping; went off cheap with the pieces they wanted. At first I was thinkin' how to rub it in; when suddenly it came to me that that was not *my* game. When I reached the shop I sat down and sent Levine the one piece and Lamb the other, with a little note, saying they had cost me so much, and I thought it was more sensible for us to work together than to fight. That afternoon I got notes from both, thanking me and an invitation from Levine to come and dine with him. I went and there I found Lamb and the rest of the 'Ring.' They said I had knocked so loudly at the door, and so often, that they thought I wanted to come in.

"I told 'em that once inside I'd try and behave myself, which seemed to please 'em, and now we're all good friends. You see we all know each other — and I think they're beginning to like me," he added thoughtfully — "I don't mind goin' to a bit of trouble to please 'em and I'm not greedy. . . ."

"I don't quite follow you," I remarked. "I thought there was no sentiment in business."

"Sometimes sentiment pays better than selfishness," he replied, and his eyes held mine.

"You see I'm about every day: they're both very rich men and don't work so hard as they used to. Anything I see that's likely to suit them, I just buy it and send it along with my card and the price that it has cost me. I've fallen right a good many times and they're beginning to like me. . . ."

"Suppose you went wrong," I said; "they'd send the piece back to you?"

"They did that pretty often at first," he said, "but they know now I'm generally right, and so they keep the things. I'm always quite willing to have 'em back; for at the price I give an idiot couldn't lose over them . . ."

The strong clear voice emphasised the expression of the hard-beaked nose and naked eyes.

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I had rather a good time at Lewis'. With the large generosity which is a part of him, he insisted that I must take away with me a terra cotta bust of a Venetian nobleman of the sixteenth century that I had admired in his smoking-room. When I told him I could only take it by paying for it, he said:

"Send twenty pounds to the Jewish Schools: that'll pay me."

"But you never got that bust for twenty pounds," I persisted. "It's worth two hundred."

"It did not cost me quite twenty pounds transport, interest and all," he retorted. "I must not cheat the charity," he added laughing. . . .

A week or two later I called on Lady Winthrop. I found the house in disorder, they were evidently moving. When she came into the room I noticed that she, too, had aged in the last five years, aged greatly. Her hair was getting grey and her eyes were not as bright as they used to be, but they were still patient and thoughtful, perhaps more resigned in expression than they had been. Life tames all of us, but she was not afraid of seeing life as it is, this little woman, and of playing her gentle part in it.

"I had no idea you were back," I began, "or of anything that has happened to you: I, too, have been abroad. I just dropped in at Christy's the other day, by chance, and saw you."

"Yes," she said sympathetically, "a strange sale, wasn't it? Some of the things fetched thousands, more even than Robert ever thought

they'd fetch, though he was a wonderful judge. But some of them went for shameful, absurd prices. There ought to have been a reserve put on them, I'm told now. Still, I did my best and the man at Christy's seemed kind."

"I'm afraid a reserve would not have helped you much," I said. "You ought to have got a few friends to have gone to the sale and bid for you — But it's hard to know what to do: the 'Ring' is so strong."

"The 'Ring?'" she questioned, and as I didn't reply, she added a little eagerly, "a friend of ours brought the great amateur Lord L—— to bid for some of the things. He sent a pair of vases up to two thousand one hundred and five pounds, though another pair had gone just before for thirty guineas, which George said were better. But for Lord L—— I don't know what we should have done," and she shivered a little. "Even now — but I don't see why I should trouble you with my worries," and she smiled bravely.

"What are the worries?" I asked. "Tell me: I may be able to help you. Sometimes even to talk about our troubles makes them easier to face."

She nodded gratefully.

"You see we have to leave this house: it is too dear for us now, and Vernon, my eldest

boy, will have to change into an Indian regiment, and give up Polo and my eldest girl, Lena, talks of going on the stage — Oh! I had hoped out of Robert's collection to have had at least fifteen thousand or twenty thousand pounds and have kept all my children with me . . .” her lips quivered.

“How much did you get?”

“About ten thousand pounds,” she sighed, “when all the commissions are paid.”

“Dreadful, dreadful,” I could not help saying, for I knew that the collection should have brought thirty thousand pounds easily enough.

It all seemed dreadful to me, the Juggernaut of Life, and this helpless lovable woman victim. . . .

The ideal society, I felt, would have to take thought for the Mrs. Winthrops too, as well as for the “Ring.” Half-remembered texts came into my mind and then this: “*Where the body is, there shall the eagles be gathered together.*”

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

THE SPIDER AND THE FLY

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CHARACTERS

THE DUKE OF B. *A dapper person about sixty, alert youthful figure, pleasant manners, regular features, grey moustache, thin grey hair and fresh colour; a light weight.*

MR. ARTHUR LEVIT. *A German Jew about five feet four in height, with large bald round head, a small dark moustache, which he has a trick of trying to twist without touching. He is stoutish, bow-legged, flat-footed, remarkable in that he is not loud, but quiet in speech, in manners and in dress. Has only a very slight Jewish accent.*

*Place: Palatial Office in Bishopsgate Street, City
and later*

An old house in St. James's Square

Time: 1900 or thereabouts

DUKE OF B. [*sitting down in Mr. Levit's office*].
I thought I'd drop in and have a talk, Mr. Levit. The truth is I don't like the look of things. Our shares in Deep Mines have fallen from thirty-five to thirty-two. They say there's

going to be war between America and Spain, and if there's war everything will tumble down. . . . I think I'll tell my broker to sell my holding — the speculative things I mean: I hope you agree?

MR. LEVIT. I'd do nothing hasty. When everybody sells, wise men buy; when everybody buys, wise men sell. War! They always say there'll be war. [*Shrugs his shoulders.*] Will you smoke?

DUKE OF B. [*waives the cigar aside*]. Oh! I hope you don't think I'd talk idle rumour. I have it on good authority that war's certain. Of course, I don't know exactly how war will affect our market — that I expect you to tell me. I have implicit confidence in your knowledge and *flair*. I think *flair's* the word for — financial genius — H'm!

MR. LEVITT. If war is certain, when will it come? That's the question: soon? If one knew that —

DUKE OF B. I'm told the declaration may be made any day. When the *Maine* was blown up, the United States Government resolved on war as soon as their navy should be ready

MR. LEVIT. You're sure? Nothing's worse than doubtful information, you know.

DUKE OF B. Oh, I'm quite convinced. [*little pompously*] You can take it from me.

MR. LEVIT. Well, let us suppose war: It will hardly hurt us or our mines. They will go on producing gold and gold is wanted in war-times: especially in war-times, eh? [*He laughs a little discreetly.*]

DUKE OF B. Yes. [*Doubtfully*] But surely everything goes down when there's war. My nephew who's in the City: you know, in Hirsch's office? [*Smiling.*] Of course you know, you got him in. He says people sell out the best things in war-time — Ordinary shares being hard to realise, they sell those stocks — I have it — which fall least. Consols and Government things. But the weak holders, and Johnny says, all holders of speculative securities like mines are weak holders, have to dump their stuff on the market whenever there's bad weather and so mines'll go down — flop. That's his word: he has rather frightened me.

MR. LEVIT [*with irresponsible eyes that drink in the little man*]. Our mines won't go flop! I can assure you of that. Mr. Hempstead is still a little young in the City.

DUKE OF B. Of course, I didn't mean that. Your mines, dear Mr. Levit, even Johnny says, are the pick of the bunch, but he was cock-sure all mines would go down, all. The proper thing to do, he said, was to sell now and buy in

during the war when everything had reached bed-rock, as he called it. And really I think there's something in what he says. You see I'm sure there'll be war.

MR. LEVIT. Did you tell Mr. Hempstead that? _

DUKE OF B. [*rather embarrassed*]. Not positively: I didn't put it positively. I didn't know then — I mean I wasn't so sure. I only put the case —

MR. LEVIT. Ah, and Mr. Hempstead advised you to sell out. Wise boy. He'll get his commission on all you sell: won't he? So he stands to win: and when you buy back later he'll get another commission, won't he? Selling and buying suit him, but will it suit you? That's the question?

DUKE OF B. [*nervously*]. As you say, dear Mr. Levit, that's the question. Of course, Johnny 'll make his commission, the young rascal. I never thought of that. He's very clever is Johnny, always was. When he was a boy at Eton, he tried to get my old cane — I often tell the story — he bought me a new one: suited me better; had a better handle gold-mounted too like the old one: he wanted to exchange: but I would not part with the old cane. It had been my father's. Johnny tried to get it and at last I found out why

The old cane was worth £200: it had belonged to the Regent and Johnny could have sold it. The new cane only cost him a "fiver." Very clever of Master Johnny.

MR. LEVIT. Very clever: too clever, by half, I'm afraid. You see your interests and his are not identical. You don't make a commission by selling and another by buying. You lose the jobber's turn and the brokerage both times so it is just twice as much your interest not to sell and buy as it is Mr. Hempstead's to get you to chop and change. That's plain: isn't it?

DUKE OF B. Of course it is, my dear Mr. Levit, of course it is, and I had never thought of it in that light, never. It's really very good of you, taking all this trouble to explain things to me. I've no head for business. So Johnny's after my old cane again: is he? The young rascal! Well, he shan't have it. . . . What would *you* advise then? Should I buy or sell? I want to make a little, if I can. My Irish property's going from bad to worse and my sons get more expensive the older they grow all except George: He's got the business head of the family: takes after his grandfather: he's just like him, I often say, same sort of hooked nose; like a — H'm!

MR. LEVIT. Well, Deep Mines have dropped a little; they were thirty-five - six: they're now thirty-two. How many do you hold?

DUKE OF B. I've five thousand; haven't I?

MR. LEVIT. H'm! Why not average? That's how money's made. [*His eyes watch his visitor's face.*] Let us take it that the Mines are worth thirty-five: You could have got that for them before this little scare, thirty-five. Now if you bought five thousand more: the lot would only have cost you thirty-three and a half, so that when they reach the normal again you'd have won £15,000 and if they go above thirty-five as we all know they will, or you'd not have bought at thirty-five, you'll reap that extra profit as well. You might net forty or fifty thousand pounds over the deal.

DUKE OF B. Of course I should, of course. How clear you make everything. I think I'll buy five thousand more; or should I wait a little and watch the market, as Johnny advises. The worst of it is the market doesn't tell me anything. It's for all the world like watching the waves: you can't tell whether they're coming in or going out unless you know whether the tide's ebbing or flowing.

MR. LEVIT. An excellent illustration, excellent. Well, I'm here to tell you that the tide, our African golden tide, is flowing, flowing

very strong. I've a wire here [*tossing over some papers as if seeking for the telegram which lies under his nose*] — Ah, here it is! — saying Deep Mines'll pay a dividend of one hundred per cent., very shortly. Of course that will only mean a yield of a little over three per cent. at present prices. But it is a beginning and when once they begin to pay they'll go on paying more and more.

DUKE OF B. Oh, that's quite different, isn't it, a dividend paying stock is quite different. They're sure to go up in price when they pay a dividend, and after all it's as much as one gets in consols.

MR. LEVIT. The true price of Deep Mines with their holdings and prospects is at least forty pounds. That's what I call a mid-water level. You may be sure they'll approximate to that price, fluctuating a little now below and now above it.

DUKE OF B. Dear me, dear me! then I should make at least £50,000, shouldn't I? Dear me! I think I'll take 5,000 more shares as you advise. [*Pauses and fidgets in his chair.*] But suppose they go down? My dear Mr. Levit, every point they go down 'll make £10,000 difference to me: won't it, and that's a consideration. It will cripple me to have to pay £10,000 out in one account, and perhaps

even more. Oh, I'm afraid I had better wait.
[*He looks distressed.*]

MR. LEVIT. Just as you like, of course. But I think you know we stand by our friends always. If Deeps run down, as you say, all you would have to do would be to come to me, and I would go halves with you over the loss.

DUKE OF B. Very handsome of you indeed, but I don't know how I can accept. Why should you bear half my loss? It really looks as if you were playing heads I win, tails you lose with me, as we used to say at school. Very generous of you, I'm sure: very handsome.

MR. LEVIT. The offer is made to our best supporter. You have helped us and we stand by you. It is only natural. Think it all over and make up your mind.

DUKE OF B. [*in a flutter*]. Then I stand to win all and only to lose half. Most favourable terms, I'm sure I don't know how to thank you. Of course I won't hesitate. I will take the 5,000 shares if indeed you can afford to make your offer?

MR. LEVIT. Oh, we can afford it, your Grace, and we are glad to stand by you.

DUKE OF B. Then it's settled, my dear Mr. Levit, and I am very grateful indeed.

MR. LEVIT. Not a word, not a word. The

order will be made out and sent to you this evening. All you have to do is to fill it in and send it back to us signed. But don't mention our little compact for the present, at least, will you?

[Levit rises and the Duke stands up and goes towards him with a little burst of confidence.]

DUKE OF B. Of course not, of course not. You know I would not speak of it to anyone. . . . By the bye I think I ought to tell you something. I'm not guessing when I say there'll be war. I've means of knowing. Our Ambassador at Washington has sent a despatch to the Home Government and it is definite, most definite: war'll be declared within a month! We're on the eve! Of course you will tell no one.

MR. LEVIT *[smiling]*. Of course, of course. H'm — you are better informed than we are: h'm, well. It's kind of you: h'm. Good-day, good-day.

[The Duke goes out. As soon as he leaves, Mr. Levit rings his bell.]

Ask Mr. Silber to come to me.

[In a few minutes enters his partner Mr. Silber.]

MR. SILBER. Duke's been 'here, hasn't he?

MR. LEVIT [*nodding*]. Yes, and he tells me there's going to be war between America and Spain within a month.

MR. SILBER. War, eh? I heard that too, from Frankfort; but it may or may not be certain.

MR. LEVIT. I tell you it's certain. The English Ambassador at Washington has written it home: the Duke has a nephew in the Foreign office, that's good enough for us, eh? [*Silber nods reflectively.*] America's bound to win, isn't she? Probably will win from the beginning to the end: at any rate is sure to win in the long run. Spain will lose Cuba and perhaps have to pay a heavy indemnity as well. We must sell Spanish stock, eh? It has scarcely gone down at all yet, because Paris is the holder but as soon as the French get the information, the bottom 'ill fall out.

MR. SILBER. We could sell small to begin with so as not to be remarked, eh?

MR. LEVIT. Heavily and at once. What's the risk? The fear of war will shake the stocks down some points. Suppose we sell five millions: we could do a bit more later; the mere declaration of war would give us half a million at least.

MR. SILBER [*whistles*]. Whew! that's heavy. Still if you're sure there's going to be war and

soon, within the month, perhaps within this account, Mein Gott I'd put it out at once between three or four brokers. [*He stutters in his excitement.*]

MR. LEVIT. By the way, Silber, see that Williams sends an order to the Duke asking us to buy 5,000 more Deeps on his account.

MR. SILBER [*turning round with astonishment*]. Buy, you mean sell?

MR. LEVIT. No, I mean buy.

MR. SILBER. Mein Gott, Mein Gott!

MR. LEVIT. No, no, Silber. You must not be so frank: you must not be surprised at anything in England. The Duke's a very important personage, not perhaps a financial genius; but ——

MR. SILBER. [*grinning*] You vill kill me, Levit, finance-genius — Oh, Mein Gott, Mein Gott!

MR. LEVIT [*busy with some papers*]. I told him if the shares went down, we would stand by him as he has stood by us.

MR. SILBER. Mein Gott, Mein Gott! You're a blooming wonder! [*Goes out chuckling.*]

Time: Four months later during the war

Place: The offices in Bishopsgate Street again

DUKE OF B. [*entering*]. I'll wait for Mr. Levit.

MR. LEVIT. [*Enters after some time.*] [*Speaks quietly.*] Good day, Duke.

DUKE OF B. [*abruptly*]. Good day, Mr. Levit. I've had to come round again. The truth is, I scarcely exist; this terrible anxiety is killing me. Deep Mines have gone down another point and they are now at twenty-six. I've lost something like £100,000 and it has crippled me, Mr. Levit. Instead of winning fifty or sixty thousand at least as you pre-pre-predicted, I've lost something like that and I've obligations. It's most unpleasant for me. My bankers are troublesome. I—I don't know how to turn or what to do. . . . Of course I know it's not your fault; but it is most unfortunate. And really, I would not bother you, but I am at my wit's ends, yes, at my wit's ends, to know what to do.

MR. LEVIT [*resignedly*]. When you go out to gamble, Duke, you must take the ups with the downs.

DUKE OF B. But it's all down, down, down, Mr. Levit. I wanted to sell at the beginning, when I knew there was going to be war. I came here determined to sell. I had made up my mind; I had talked it over with Mr. Hempstead, and was quite decided about it. You persuaded me to buy more. You were very convincing. I had 5,000 and then I bought another 5,000, to average, as you said; but the averaging has landed me in a hole, Mr. Levit.

. . . I was never in such a painful position in my life. It's humiliating at my age and, in my position, insupportable. . . . My bankers don't like it. I don't think it quite fair of you, because you must have known what was going to happen, you must have known.

MR. LEVIT [*taking in the other's excitement with calm brown eyes*]. If we knew what would happen, Duke, we should all be rich men, very rich. We have always done what we have promised, haven't we? I told you as the shares went down I would meet half your loss every account. I have done so, haven't I? Without a word?

DUKE OF B. Yes, you have, but I didn't begin with the first account to ask you for help, as I should have done. I only came to you when I had to. And now if Deep Mines drop another point, Mr. Levit, I shall be — I don't know where to turn. I am ashamed to ask my boy George. Such a risk was not for me. Risks don't suit my years or my position. Everyone sees how harassed I am, and you said you would stand by me: didn't you?

MR. LEVIT [*in the same impassive, even voice*]. I always meant to stand by you. Will it help you if I take the loss of the next account wholly on my shoulders? I don't want you to be anxious.

DUKE OF B. [*with tears in his eyes and a broken voice. Covers his face with his hands*]. That's very kind of you, my dear Levit, very kind of you indeed. I—I won't forget it. I can promise you. Very good of you indeed.

MR. LEVIT. Well then, Duke, that is settled. Just send me your account and I will send you my cheque for it. I don't want you to be bothered. But I thought you told me those London houses of yours were free. If your bankers bother you, you could easily deposit the title deeds of those houses with them. I only tell you this to give you a hint. We sometimes forget our resources in time of need.

DUKE OF B. Oh, my bankers made me deposit those title deeds with them a month ago; indeed I mortgaged them to them. No, no, I have thought of everything. I am really pinched.

MR. LEVIT. If a few thousands would make it easier for you, don't hesitate to ask. We are in the same boat, are we not?

DUKE OF B. My dear Levit, it's very good of you. But thanks, no, I don't want anything. I only want the anxiety lifted, that desperate struggle and the heavy loss every fortnight. I had no idea that fortnights could come round so quickly. One thanks God for an account of nineteen days. [*Mr. Levit smiles*]

a little.] By the way, I had something else to ask you, but your kindness, my dear Levit, has driven it out of my head, dear me. One's memory gets so bad. Oh, yes, of course; will you come on Wednesday week and meet the Prime Minister at dinner? I think you'll like him. He's got such charming manners, modern manners, of course, a little familiar and *sans gêne*, but with great charm and tact, wonderful tact — wonderful, I mean, in one so young.

MR. LEVIT. I shall be delighted, Duke, delighted.

DUKE OF B. You must not call me Duke you know. My dear Levit, call me by my name as I call you by yours. You've been too good to me for me to be formal. [*In a burst of confidence*] They used to call me "Squib" at Eton because when I got angry I went off fizz and bang! like those Fifth of November things. Squib Townsend. You must call me Townsend. [*The Duke lays his hands on Levit's shoulders.*] I insist upon it. [*Levit smiles discreetly.*] Well, then, that's settled. The little dinner will be at half past eight at my house, and I'm sure you'll like the Prime Minister. I've told him already that you should be among the Privy Councillors, and it will come in time [*a little pompously*]. It will come, I'm sure.

MR. LEVIT [*bowing*]. I want nothing, Duke, nothing.

DUKE OF B. [*turning to go*]. You send me away in a very different humour, I feel ten years younger. Alright then, till Wednesday next.

MR. LEVIT. Good day, Duke, till Wednesday. [*As the door closes Levit sits down with a pencil and in a few minutes Silber enters.*]

MR. SILBER. Still going down; 25½ now. Isaacs and Barney have been selling thousands, though they promised not to; but I am sure it's them.

MR. LEVIT. Get the names on the transfers; that'll tell the tale. I'm rather glad they're selling.

MR. SILBER [*in astonishment*]. Glad!

MR. LEVIT. Yes, I'll get back on Barney some day, and I want to be able to say that he hit first.

MR. SILBER. But what are we to do? They're offering thousands.

MR. LEVIT. Buy at 25 all they offer.

MR. SILBER. But they have already offered 10,000.

MR. LEVIT. Buy at 25.

MR. SILBER. But suppose they offer 20,000 more?

MR. LEVIT. Suppose? Have they got 'em? Barney'll not risk his neck against me.

MR. SILBER. You don't think they can. Mein Gott, you take it coolly. Another point or two and we'll have to use our reserve, and God knows how long this damned war will last.

MR. LEVIT. We've nearly touched the bottom, Silber. I can feel the ship lift as if we had touched. Now you know why I sold those ten million Spanish stocks before the declaration of war. I wanted a million or so to support our own shares with.

MR. SILBER. Of course I see; it was very bold; but the million has all gone now and we're not out of the wood yet.

MR. LEVIT. It will all come back and more. We've got it on a string, Silber. The string's elastic and may stretch a little; but it will come back all the quicker.

MR. SILBER. Well, I'm glad you're confident. It's making me shiver. These English banks are not to be reckoned on for help in bad times like the German ones.

MR. LEVIT [*contemptuously*]. There's no reckoning on anyone in bad times, except yourself. I do not think our winnings will be quite run off. Till Deep Mines go below twenty-five we have still a margin, and I am inclined to think that this next account will be the last on the down grade. Spain cannot fight any longer; her last ships have been

destroyed. She must make peace. We're really on bedrock. I'm inclined to buy five millions Spanish.

MR. SILBER. Mein Gott, mein Gott! You frighten me.

MR. LEVIT. We will leave it for a couple of days if you like; but watch and you'll see I am right. We've touched bottom.

MR. SILBER. You say that, though Deep Mines have fallen another half point this morning.

MR. LEVIT. You've told me the reason, too! Barney and Isaacs are selling. They know when to hit so as to hurt; it's the last stone kills, not the first. But they've made a mistake. You've not told me that Spanish stocks have fallen, or that Consols have fallen, or French Rentes. Between now and the next two or three days you'll find Government stocks hardening. The great bankers must know the storm is over; the Bleichroeders know and the Rothschilds know. Watch and you'll see National stocks hardening, and then you'll know I'm right, and we'll buy Spanish.

MR. SILBER. What of Deeps? Won't you buy zem?

MR. LEVIT. Deeps? Deeps will go up of themselves. The Duke'll buy again, and his friends.

MR. SILBER. Mein Gott, mein Gott, vot a man you are, Levit, vot a man, vot a head for finance. . . .

Time: Five years later

Place: The Duke of B.'s town house in St. James's Square

[*The Duke seated in an armchair in his study; his son, Lord Frederick Townsend, standing by the fireplace, smoking a cigarette.*]

DUKE OF B. [*a letter in his hand*]. I cannot understand it. It's too annoying.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. What's troubling you, Sir?

DUKE OF B. I asked the Prime Minister to put Levit in the Privy Council. I owe Levit a great deal, as you know. He's been very good to me, and I think he should be in the Privy Council. Such riches as his deserve to be recognised. Balsquith puts me off; says he'll see about it. But underneath his courtesy and really charming manner I feel a sort of disinclination.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. I'd drop it. You mentioned it, did what you could, and really those Jews are beginning to infect London. You meet 'em everywhere.

DUKE OF B. But I've promised Levit. And it's the first time in my life I've ever asked a favour of the Government. I think they owe me some consideration.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. Levit is rich, of course, but Jews are a shady lot.

DUKE OF B. Levit's not shady. He's one of the best fellows in the world. He's quite straight and he stood by me during the Spanish-American War like a brick.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. I know you think so, Sir, but that's scarcely a public service which the Prime Minister should recognise.

DUKE OF B. Public service. Levit's contribution to the income tax alone is a public service. And do I count for nothing? Public service, indeed. You talk nonsense, Freddy.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. Well you know, Sir, Johnny Hempstead will have it that Levit gave you bad advice even in the Spanish-American affair and —

DUKE OF B. Johnny, indeed! What can Johnny know about it?

LORD F. TOWNSEND. Johnny's as smart as they make 'em. He just came in to talk to me as you sent for me. I wish you'd hear him. He's all there — no flies on Johnny — and he's made a pot of money, a pot; and if that isn't proof of ability, I don't know one.

DUKE OF B. I don't mind hearing him, but he knows nothing.

[Footman enters]

LORD F. TOWNSEND. Ask Mr. Hempstead to come here; the Duke wishes to see him.

[A minute or so later Mr. Hempstead comes in, smiling, and shakes hands with the Duke.]

DUKE OF B. I hear you're making a lot of money, Johnny, and I'm very glad to hear it.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Oh, no, Sir, not a lot; just a few thousands; enough to pay for cigarettes and ——

DUKE OF B. I hope not chorus girls, Johnny?

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Oh, no, Sir, my salad days are over; I'm in the brown and sear now, indeed very serious!

LORD F. TOWNSEND. I can't get the Duke to take our view of Levit, Johnny. He says he owes Levit real gratitude for all he did during the Spanish-American War. Levit to him's a sort of providence. I want you to convince him he's mistaken ——

DUKE OF B. Don't exaggerate, Freddy. I say Levit's a very good fellow. Of course he's common and has no "air," but that's not to be expected. God knows who his father and

mother were. But he stood by me during the Spanish-American War and I'm grateful to him. Why do you smile, Johnny? It irritates me to see you smiling in that superior way! .

MR. HEMPSTEAD. I was smiling, Sir, because that's not Levit's reputation in the City, and you get to know men when you do business with them. Levit's as hard as nails.

DUKE OF B. I don't know anything about his reputation: he may treat other people harshly. I don't know and I don't much care. He treated me well.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Of course he'd treat you well; as well as he could treat anyone, that is. You were his ace of trumps.

DUKE OF B. I'm not quite a fool, Johnny, even though I don't live in the City and don't know the difference between stocks and shares, as you courteously pointed out to me once. I only say I think Levit a generous and kindly man according to modern standards, or I would not have him at my house and at my table.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. You were always a little bit of a Don Quixote, weren't you, Uncle? You never would say what Levit did for you in the Spanish-American War, and I'm curious to find out. You always said he was generous, but I know a good deal about Levit and his

methods, and I've always thought you were mistaken. I wish you'd tell us in confidence exactly what he did do for you.

DUKE OF B. He stood by me as a friend stands by a friend, and I'll stand by him when he needs it.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Yes, you've often told us that; but what did he do exactly? I remember quite well before the Spanish-American War you and I had a long talk. You told me that you held some thousands of Deep Mines which you had bought on Mr. Levit's advice at 35 or 36. They were then at 33, I think, or 34. At any rate, they had begun to go down. I advised you to cut your loss and sell. You hinted to me that you thought there'd be war, and thinking you spoke with knowledge, I told you to sell. Levit didn't tell you to sell, did he?

DUKE OF B. [*reluctantly*]. No, he didn't. He advised me to buy and average, and I've done pretty well by it.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Did you tell Levit there was going to be war?

DUKE OF B. No, No! [*hesitatingly*] I may have hinted at something of the sort. But [*angrily*] I don't see what that's got to do with the matter.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Surely you see now that

Levit advised you badly? He ought to have advised you to sell Deep Mines.

DUKE OF B. He ought to have done nothing of the sort.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. He knew Deep Mines would go down when war was declared, and you'd have made money by selling; he knew that, yet he got you into the fight to help him by buying more.

DUKE OF B. How could that help him?

MR. HEMPSTEAD. It was all over London that the Duke of B. was buying Levit's stock. It was madness on your part, quixotic madness and nothing else.

DUKE OF B. It was not madness. I had not any liking for Levit then; it was what he did after that made me like him.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. There it is again. What did he do but give you bad advice out of a self-interested motive?

DUKE OF B. [*sniffingly*]. Self-interested indeed!

LORD F. TOWNSEND. I think Johnny's right, Father. He did give you jolly bad advice, and the motive must have been self-interest.

DUKE OF B. [*hotly*]. Well if you want to know what he did, I'll tell you. He paid half my losses on Deep Mines as they went down, paid to the tune of something like £60,000

with me. He sent me his cheque on each account, and so enabled me to keep my Deep Mines until the war was over and they began to jump up. That, Sir [*turning to Johnny Hempstead*], is what I call standing by a man: and I won't forget it.

MR. HEMPSTEAD [*bursting out laughing and twisting about*]. Oh, my God, you'll kill me, Uncle. You'll kill me dead.

DUKE OF B. } LORD F. } TOWNSEND }	[<i>together</i>]	{ Are you mad? What d'ye mean, Johnny?
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MR. HEMPSTEAD [*wiping his eyes*]. Oh, it's too funny. This world is too comic for me, that a man should be grateful to another for stealing from him, just as a girl is grateful to you sometimes in like circumstances. My God! it's too funny.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. But what do you mean?

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Surely you see? [*Turning to Lord Frederick Townsend.*] No, well it's clear as sunlight. The Duke was backing up Levit to the tune of perhaps three quarters of a million and giving him the influence of his name and position to boot. It was Levit who should be grateful and not the Duke. Surely you see that?

DUKE OF B. You don't know what you are talking about. I tell you he paid half my

losses and the whole of the loss on the last account — explain that if you can.

MR. HEMPSTEAD [*turning to the Duke seriously*]. Please, Sir, do follow me. First of all you were supporting Levit, weren't you? He sent you his cheque, but you paid the brokers. You were responsible for the twenty or twenty-five thousand Deep Mines you were carrying; weren't you?

DUKE OF B. I suppose so, but he helped me to carry 'em.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. After getting you in, he did not let you sink, that's clear, but your money went into Levit's pocket all the while.

DUKE OF B. I don't believe a word of it.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. But where else did it go? Deep Mines belong to Levit: they are his shares. He held the bulk of them in his office. Probably towards the end of the war he held nearly all of 'em or else they'd have dropped far below twenty-five. Whatever money you paid, whatever responsibility you took, was simply helping Levit, and I only hope he was duly grateful.

DUKE OF B. Dear me, dear me!

MR. HEMPSTEAD [*modestly*]. You see I know Levit. Now, Uncle, let me ask you something. When the shares began to go up did Mr. Levit play fair?

DUKE OF B. Goodness gracious, you distress me [*mopping his brow*].

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Now did he? Tell us honestly, Uncle.

DUKE OF B. [*hesitatingly*]. Well he did request me to pay him back first. I think he might have waited and shared equally with me. When the shares went from twenty-five to twenty-seven in one account, he wanted the whole profit for himself. I thought it rather unfair, but as he had paid the whole drop from twenty-six down, I supposed it was alright.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Good God, and that's the man you call generous, a man who could put you into such a rotten game, who gets all your information and power and money to support him and then makes you pay him back first. My God, what meanness! Only Levit would have had the impudence.

DUKE OF B. At any rate, I followed Deep Mines up till they came near forty. I made more than £100,000 over them and I have made a good deal more since. I don't think I did badly.

LORD F. TOWNSEND. No, that's true. But I don't know how far you were justified in risking all you risked. Dufferin came to grief, you know, in the city and a good many others. It was very risky.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Risky? I should think it was; worse than risky. They say Levit came very near the edge during that war. Probably it was the Duke who saved him, tided him over, and now it's the Duke is grateful and not Levit. It's a comic world, Freddy, very comic. Jehovah has a keen sense of humour.

DUKE OF B. At any rate, Levit stood by me when the pinch came. You won't get that out of my head, Master Johnny, clever as you are.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Don Quixote's not in it with you, Uncle. But there, take it from me, you owe Levit nothing, a good deal less than nothing.


DUKE OF B. [*obstinately*]. He stood by me.

MR. HEMPSTEAD. Yes, as the financier usually stands by the Duke: a man must stand by you when he has his hand in your pocket.

THE MAGIC GLASSES

THE MAGIC GLASSES

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 ONE raw November morning, I left my rooms near the British Museum and walked along Oxford Street. It was cold and misty: the air like shredded cotton-wool. Before I reached the Quadrant, the mist thickened to fog, with the colour of muddied water, and walking became difficult. As I had no particular object in view, I got into talk with a policeman, and, by his advice, went into the Vine Street Police Court, to pass an hour or two before lunch. Inside the court, the atmosphere was comparatively clear, and I took my seat on one of the oak benches with a feeling of vague curiosity. There was a case going on as I entered: an old man, who pretended to be an optician, had been taken up by the police for obstructing the traffic by selling glasses. His green tray, with leathern shoulder-straps, was on the solicitors' table. The charge of obstruction could not be sustained; the old man had moved on as soon as the police told him to, and the inspector had substituted a charge of fraud, on the complaint of a workman and a shop-

keeper. A constable had just finished his evidence when I came into the court. He left the box with a self-satisfied air and the muttered remark that the culprit was "a rare bad 'un."

I glanced about for the supposed criminal and found that he was seated near me on a cross-bench in the charge of a sturdy policeman. He did not look like a criminal: he was tall, thin and badly dressed in a suit of rusty black, which seemed to float about his meagre person; his complexion was tallowy-white, like the sprouts of potatoes which have been kept a long time in a dark cellar; he seemed about sixty years old. But he had none of the furtive glances of the criminal; none of the uneasiness: his eye rested on mine and passed aside with calm indifference, contemplative and not alarmed.

The workman who was produced by the police in support of the charge of fraud amused me. He was a young man, about middle height, and dressed in corduroys with a rough jacket of dark tweed. He was a bad witness: he hesitated, stopped and corrected himself, as if he didn't know the meaning of any words except the commonest phrases of everyday use. But he was evidently honest: his brown eyes looked out on the world fairly enough. His faltering came from the fact that he was

only half articulate. Disentangled from the mist of inappropriate words, his meaning was sufficiently clear.

He had been asked by the accused, whom he persisted in calling "the old gentleman," to buy a pair of spectacles: they would show him things truer-like than he could see 'em; and so he "went a bob on 'em." Questioned by the magistrate as to whether he could see things more plainly through the glasses, he shook his head:

"No; about the same."

Then came the question: Had he been deceived? Apparently he didn't know the meaning of the word "deceived."

"Cheated," the magistrate substituted.

"No; he hadn't been cheated."

"Well, disappointed then?"

"No; he couldn't say that."

"Would he spend another shilling on a similar pair of glasses?"

"No," he would not; "one bob was enough to lose."

When told he might go, he shuffled out of the witness-box, and on his way to the door attempted more than once to nod to the accused. Evidently there was no malice in him.

The second police witness had fluency and self-possession enough for a lawyer: a middle-

aged man, tall, florid and inclined to be stout; he was over-dressed, like a spruce shopman, in black frock-coat, grey trousers and light-coloured tie. He talked volubly, with a hot indignation which seemed to match his full red cheeks. If the workman was an undecided and weak witness, Mr. Hallett, of High Holborn, was a most convinced and determined witness. He had been induced to buy the glasses, he declared, by the "old party," who told him that they would show him things exactly as they were — the truth of everything. You'd only have to look through 'em at a man to see whether he was trying to "do" you or not. That was why he bought them. He was not asked a shilling for them, but a sovereign and he gave it — twenty shillings. When he put the glasses on, he could see nothing with them, nothing at all; it was a "plant": and so he wanted the "old party" to take 'em back and return his sovereign; that might have caused the obstruction that the policeman had objected to. The "old man" refused to give him his money back; said he had not cheated him; had the impudence to pretend that he (Hallett) had no eyes for truth, and, therefore, could see nothing with the glasses. "A blamed lie," he called it, and a "do," and the "old man" ought to get six months for it.

Once or twice, the magistrate had to direct the stream of emphatic words. But the accusation was formal and precise. The question now was: How would the magistrate deal with the case? At first sight, Mr. Brown, the magistrate, made a good impression on me. He was getting on in life: the dark hair was growing thin on top and a little grey at the sides. The head was well-shaped; the forehead notably broad; the chin and jaw firm. The only unpleasant feature in the face was the hard line of mouth, with thin, unsympathetic lips. Mr. Brown was reputed to be a great scholar, and was just the type of man who would have made a pedant; a man of good intellect and thin blood, who would find books and words more interesting than men and deeds.

At first, Mr. Brown had seemed to be on the side of the accused: he tried to soften Mr. Hallett's anger. One or two of his questions, indeed, were pointed and sensible:

"You wouldn't take goods back after you had sold them, would you, Mr. Hallett?" he asked.

"Of course I would," replied Mr. Hallett stoutly; "I'd take any of my stock back at a twenty per cent. reduction; my goods are honest goods: prices marked plain on 'em. But 'e would not give me fifteen shillings back

out of my sovereign; not 'e; 'e meant stickin' to it all."

The magistrate looked into the body of the court and, addressing the accused, said:

"Will you reserve your defence, Mr. Henry?"

"Penry, your worship: Matthew Penry," corrected the old man in a quiet, low-pitched voice, as he rose to his feet. "If I may say so: the charge of fraud is absurd. Mr. Hallett seems to be angry because I sold one pair of glasses for a shilling and another pair to him for a sovereign. But they were not the same glasses and, if they had been, I am surely allowed to ask for my wares what I please."

"That is true," interrupted the magistrate; "but he says that you told him he would see the truth through them. I suppose you meant that he would see more truly through them than with his own eyes?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Penry, with a certain hesitation.

"But he did not see more truly through them," continued the magistrate, "or he would not have wanted you to take them back."

"No," Mr. Penry acknowledged; "but that is his fault, not the fault of the glasses. They would show the truth, if he had any faculty for seeing it: glasses are no good to the blind."

"Come, come," said the magistrate; "now

you are beginning to confuse me. You don't really pretend that your glasses will show the truth of things, the reality; you mean that they will improve one's sight, don't you?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Penry, "one's sight for truth, for reality."

"Well," retorted the magistrate smiling, "that seems rather metaphysical than practical, doesn't it? If your spectacles enable one to discern the truth, I'd buy a pair myself: they might be useful in this court sometimes," and he looked about him with a smile, as if expecting applause.

With eager haste, the old man took him at his word, threw open his case, selected a pair of glasses and passed them to the clerk, who handed them up to Mr. Brown.

The magistrate put the glasses on; looked round the court for a minute or two, and then broke out:

"Dear me! Dear me! How extraordinary! These glasses alter everyone in the court. It's really astonishing. They don't improve the looks of people; on the contrary, a more villainous set of countenances it would be difficult to imagine. If these glasses are to be trusted, men are more like wild animals than human beings, and the worst of all are the solicitors;

really a terrible set of faces. But this may be the truth of things; these spectacles do show one more than one's ordinary eyes can perceive. Dear me! Dear me! It is most astonishing; but I feel inclined to accept Mr. Penry's statement about them," and he peered over the spectacles at the court.

"Would you like to look in a glass, your worship?" asked one of the solicitors drily, rising, however, to his feet with an attitude of respect at the same time; "perhaps that would be the best test."

Mr. Brown appeared to be a little surprised, but replied:

"If I had a glass, I would willingly."

Before the words were out of his mouth, his clerk had tripped round the bench, gone into the magistrate's private room, and returned with a small looking-glass, which he handed up to his worship.

As Mr. Brown looked in the glass, the smile of expectancy left his face. In a moment or two, he put down the glass gravely, took off the spectacles and handed them to the clerk, who returned them to Mr. Penry. After a pause, he said shortly:

"It is well, perhaps, to leave all these matters of fact to a jury. I will accept a small bail, Mr. Penry," he went on; "but I think you

must be bound over to answer this charge at the sessions."

I caught the words, "£50 apiece in two sureties and his own recognisances in £100," and then Mr. Penry was told by the policeman to go and wait in the body of the court till the required sureties were forthcoming. By chance, the old man came and sat beside me and I was able to examine him closely. His moustache and beard must have been auburn at one time, but now the reddish tinge seemed only to discolour the grey. The beard was thin and long and unkempt, and added to the forlorn untidiness of his appearance. He carried his head bent forward, as if the neck were too weak to support it. He seemed feeble and old and neglected. He caught me looking at him, and I noticed that his eyes were a clear blue, as if he were younger than I had thought. His gentle, scholarly manner and refined voice had won my sympathy; and, when our eyes met, I introduced myself and told him I should be glad to be one of his sureties, if that would save him time or trouble. He thanked me with a sort of detached courtesy: he would gladly accept my offer.

"You stated your case," I remarked, "so that you confused the magistrate. You almost said that your glasses were — magic glasses,"

I went on, smiling and hesitating, because I did not wish to offend him, and yet hardly knew how to convey the impression his words had left upon me.

"Magic glasses," he repeated gravely, as if weighing the words; "yes, you might call them magic glasses."

To say that I was astonished only gives a faint idea of my surprise and wonder:

"Surely, you don't mean that they show things as they are," I asked: "the truth of things?"

"That is what I mean," he replied quietly.

"Then they are not ordinary glasses?" I remarked inanely.

"No," he repeated gravely; "not ordinary glasses."

He had a curious trick, I noticed, of peering at one very intently with narrowed eyes and then blinking rapidly several times in succession as if the strain were too great to be borne.

He had made me extremely curious, and yet I did not like to ask outright to be allowed to try a pair of his glasses; so I went on with my questions:

"But, if they show truth, how was it that Mr. Hallett could see nothing through them?"

"Simply because he has no sense of reality; he has killed the innate faculty for truth. It

was probably at no time very great," went on this strange merchant, smiling; "but his trader's habits have utterly destroyed it; he has so steeped himself in lies that he is now blind to the truth, incapable of perceiving it. The workman, you remember, could see fairly well through his spectacles."

"Yes," I replied laughing; "and the magistrate evidently saw a good deal more through his than he cared to acknowledge."

The old man laughed, too, in an ingenuous, youthful way that I found charming.

At last I got to the Rubicon.

"Would you let me buy a pair of your glasses?" I asked.

"I shall be delighted to give you a pair, if you will accept them," he replied, with eager courtesy; "my surety ought certainly to have a pair"; and then he peered at me in his curious, intent way. A moment later, he turned round, and, opening his tray, picked out a pair of spectacles and handed them to me.

I put them on with trembling eagerness and stared about me. The magistrate had told the truth; they altered everything: the people were the same and yet not the same; this face was coarsened past all description; that face sharpened and made hideous with greed; while another was brutalised with lust. One recognised,

so to speak, the dominant passion in each person. Something moved me to turn my glasses on the merchant; if I was astounded before, I was now lost in wonder: the glasses transformed him. The grey beard was tinged with gold, the blue eyes luminous with intelligence; all the features ennobled; the countenance irradiated sincerity and kindliness. I pulled off the glasses hastily and the vision passed away. Mr. Penry was looking at me with a curious little pleased smile of anticipation: involuntarily, I put out my hand to him with a sort of reverence:

"Wonderful," I exclaimed; "your face is wonderful and all the others grotesque and hideous. What does it mean? Tell me! Won't you?"

"You must come with me to my room," he said, "where we can talk freely, and I think you will not regret having helped me. I should like to explain everything to you. There are so few men," he added, "who proffer help to another man in difficulty. I should like to show you that I am grateful."

"There is no cause for gratitude," I said hastily; "I have done nothing."

His voice now seemed to me to be curiously refined and impressive, and recalled to me the

vision of his face, made beautiful by the strange glasses. . . .

I have been particular to put down how Mr. Penry first appeared to me, because after I had once seen him through his spectacles, I never saw him again as I had seen him at first. Remembering my earliest impressions of him, I used to wonder how I could have been so mistaken. His face had refinement and gentleness in every line; a certain courage, too, that was wholly spiritual. Already I was keenly interested in Mr. Penry; eager to know more about him; to help him, if that were possible, in any and every way.

Some time elapsed before the formalities for his bail were arranged, and then I persuaded him to come out with me to lunch. He got up quietly, put the leathern straps over his shoulders, tucked the big case under his arm and walked into the street with perfect self-possession; and I was not now in any way ashamed of his appearance, as I should have been an hour or two before: I was too excited even to feel pride; I was simply glad and curious.

And this favourable impression grew with everything Mr. Penry said and did, till at last nothing but service would content me; so, after lunch, I put him into a cab and drove him off

to my own solicitor. I found Mr. Morris, of Messrs. Morris, Coote and Co., quite willing to take up his case at the sessions; willing, too, to believe that the charge was "trumped up" by the police and without serious foundation. But, when I drew Mr. Morris aside and tried to persuade him that his new client was a man of extraordinary powers, he smiled incredulously.

"You are enthusiastic, Mr. Winter," he said half reproachfully; "but we solicitors are compelled to see things in the cold light of reason. Why should you undertake to defend this Mr. Penry? Of course if you have made up your mind," he went on, passing over my interruption, "I shall do my best for him; but if I were you, I'd keep my eyes open and do nothing rashly."

In order to impress him, I put on a similar cold tone and declared that Mr. Penry was a friend of mine and that he must leave no stone unturned to vindicate his honesty. And with this I went back to Mr. Penry, and we left the office together.

Mr. Penry's lodging disappointed me; my expectations, I am afraid, were now tuned far above the ordinary. It was in Chelsea, high up, in a rickety old house overlooking a dingy road and barges drawn up on the slimy, fetid

mud-banks. And yet, even here, romance was present for the romantic; the fog-wreaths curling over the river clothed the houses opposite in soft mystery, as if they had been draped in blue samite, and through the water-laden air the sun glowed round and red as a fiery wheel of Phaëton's chariot. The room was very bare; by the broad low window stood a large deal table crowded with instruments and glasses; strong electric lamps on the right and left testified to the prolonged labours of the optician. The roof of the garret ran up towards the centre, and by the wall there was a low truckle-bed, fenced off by a cheap Japanese paper-screen. The whole of the wall between the bed and the window was furnished with plain pine-shelves, filled with books; everything was neat, but the room seemed friendless and cold in the thick, damp air.

There we sat and talked together, till the sun slid out of sight and the fog thickened and night came on: there our acquaintance, so strangely begun, grew to friendship. Before we went to dinner, the old man had shown me the portraits of his two daughters and a little miniature of his wife, who had died fifteen years before.

It was the first of many talks in that room, the first of many confidences. Bit by bit, I heard the whole of Mr. Penry's history. It

was told to me piecemeal and inconsequently, as a friend talks to a friend in growing intimacy; and, if I now let Mr. Penry tell his tale in regular sequence and at one stretch, it is mainly in order to spare the reader the tedium of interrupted narration and needless repetitions.

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“My father was an optician,” Mr. Penry began, “and a maker of spectacles in Chelsea. We lived over the shop in the King’s Road, and my childhood was happy enough, but not in any way peculiar. Like other healthy children, I liked play much better than lessons; but my school-days were too uneventful, too empty of love to be happy. My mother died when I was too young to know or regret her; my father was kind, in spite of his precise, puritanical ways. I was the only boy, which perhaps made him kinder to me, and very much younger than my two sisters, who were grown up when I was in short clothes and who married and left my father’s house before I had got to know them, or to feel much affection for them.

“When I was about sixteen, my father took me from school and began teaching me his own trade. He had been an admirable workman in his time, of the old English sort — careful and capable, though somewhat slow. The

desire was always present in him to grind and polish each glass as well as he could, and this practice had given him a certain repute with a circle of good customers. He taught me every part of his craft as he had learnt it; and, in the next five or six years, imbued me with his own wish to do each piece of work as perfectly as possible. But this period of initiation did not last long. Before I reached manhood, I began to draw apart from my father, to live my own life and to show a love of reading and thinking foreign to his habit. It was religion which separated us. At school I had learnt some French and German, and in both languages I came across sceptical opinions which slowly grew in my mind, and in time led me to discard and almost to dislike the religion of my father. I mention this simply because any little originality in me seemed to spring from this inquiry and from the mental struggle that convulsed three or four years of my youth. For months and months I read feverishly to conquer my doubts, and then I read almost as eagerly to confirm my scepticism.

“I still remember the glow of surprise and hope which came over me the first time I read that Spinoza, one of the heroes of my thought, had also made his living by polishing glasses. He was the best workman of his time, it appeared,

and I determined to become the best workman of my time; from that moment, I took to my trade seriously, strenuously.

“I learned everything I could about glass, and began to make my own material, after the best recipes. I got books on optics, too, and studied them, and so, bit by bit, mastered the science of my craft.

“I was not more than nineteen or twenty when my father found out that I was a much better workman than his assistant Thompson. Some glasses had been sent to us from a great oculist in Harley Street, with a multitude of minute directions. They had been made by Thompson, and were brought back to us one afternoon by a very fidgety old gentleman who declared that they did not suit him at all. The letter which he showed from Sir William Creighton, the oculist, hinted that the glasses were not carefully made. My father was out and, in his absence, I opened the letter. As soon as I had looked at the glasses, I saw that the complaint was justified, and I told the old gentleman so. He turned out to be the famous parliamentary speaker, Lord B. He said to me testily:

“‘All right, young man; you make my glasses correctly and I shall be satisfied; but not till then; you understand, not till then.’

"I smiled at him and told him I would do the work myself, and he went out of the shop muttering, as if only half reassured by my promises. Then I determined to show what I could do. When my father returned, I told him what had happened, and asked him to leave the work to me. He consented, and I went off at once to the little workshop I had made in our back-yard and settled down to the task. I made my glass and polished it, and then ground the spectacles according to the directions. When I had finished, I sent them to Sir William Creighton with a note, and a few days afterwards we had another visit from Lord B., who told my father that he had never had such glasses and that I was a 'perfect treasure.' Like many very crochety people, he was hard to satisfy, but once satisfied he was as lavish in praise as in blame. Lord B. made my reputation as a maker of spectacles and for years I was content with this little triumph. . . .

"I married when I was about two or three-and-twenty and seven or eight years afterwards my father died. The gap caused by his death, the void of loss and loneliness, was more than filled up by my young children. I had two little girls who, at this time, were a source of perpetual interest to me. **H**ow one grows to love the little creatures, with their laughter

and tears, their hopes and questions and make-believe! And how one's love for them is intensified by all the trouble one takes to win their love and by all the plans one weaves for their future! But all this is common human experience and will only bore you. A man's happiness is not interesting to other people, and I don't know that much happiness is good for a man himself; at any rate, during the ten or fifteen years in which I was happiest, I did least; made least progress, I mean, as a workman and the least intellectual advance as a man. But when my girls began to grow up and detach themselves from me and the home, my intellectual nature began to stir again. One must have some interests in life, and, if the heart is empty, the head becomes busier, I often think.

"One day I had a notable visit. A man came in to get a pair of spectacles made: a remarkable man. He was young, gay and enthusiastic, with an astonishing flow of words, an astonishing brightness of speech and manner. He seemed to light up the dingy old shop with his vivacity and happy frankness. He wanted spectacles to correct a slight dissimilarity between his right eye and his left, and he had been advised to come to me by Sir William Creighton, as the glasses would have to be par-

ticularly well made. I promised to work at them myself, and on that he burst out:

“‘I shall be very curious to see whether perfect eyes help or hurt my art. You know I am a painter,’ he went on, throwing his hair back from his forehead, ‘and each of us painters sees life in his own way, and beauty with certain peculiarities. It would be curious, wouldn’t it? if talent came from a difference between one’s eyes!’

“I smiled at his eagerness, and took down his name, then altogether unknown to me; but soon to become known and memorable above all other names: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. I made the glasses and he was enthusiastic about them, and brought me a little painting of himself by way of gratitude.

“There it is,” said Penry, pointing to a little panel that hung by his bedside; “the likeness of an extraordinary man — a genius, if ever there was one. I don’t know why he took to me, except that I admired him intensely; my shop, too, was near his house in Chelsea, and he used often to drop in and pass an hour in my back parlour and talk — such talk as I had never heard before and have never heard since. His words were food and drink to me, and more than that. Either his thoughts or the magic of his personality supplied my mind with the

essence of growth and vigour which had hitherto been lacking to it; in a very real sense, Rossetti became my spiritual father. He taught me things about art that I had never imagined; opened to me a new heaven and a new earth and, above all, showed me that my craft, too, had artistic possibilities in it that I had never dreamed of before.

“I shall never forget the moment when he first planted the seed in me that has since grown and grown till it has filled my life. It was in my parlour behind the shop. He had been talking in his eager, vivid way, pouring out truths and thoughts, epigrams and poetry, as a great jeweller sometimes pours gems from hand to hand. I had sat listening open-mouthed, trying to remember as much as I could, to assimilate some small part of all that word-wealth. He suddenly stopped, and we smoked on for a few minutes in silence; then he broke out again:

“‘Do you know, my solemn friend,’ he said abruptly, ‘that I struck an idea the other day which might suit you. I was reading one of Walter Scott’s novels: that romantic stuff of his amuses me, you know, though it isn’t as deep as the sea. Well, I found out that, about a hundred years ago, a man like you made what they called Claude-glasses. I suppose

they were merely rose-tinted,' he laughed, 'but at any rate, they were supposed to make everything beautiful in a Claude-like way. Now, why shouldn't you make such glasses? It would do Englishmen a lot of good to see things rose-tinted for a while. Then, too, you might make Rossetti-glasses,' he went on laughingly, 'and, if these dull Saxons could only get a glimpse of the passion that possesses him, it would wake them up, I know. Why not go to work, my friend, at something worth doing? Do you know,' he continued seriously, 'there might be something in it. I don't believe, if I had had your glasses at the beginning, I should ever have been the artist I am. I mean,' he said, talking half to himself, 'if my eyes had been all right from the beginning, I might perhaps have been contented with what I saw. But as my eyes were imperfect I tried to see things as my soul saw them, and so invented looks and gestures that the real world could never give.'

"I scarcely understood what he meant," said Mr. Penry, "but his words dwelt with me: the ground had been prepared for them; he had prepared it; and at once they took root in me and began to grow. I could not get the idea of the Claude-glasses and the Rossetti-glasses out of my head, and at last I advertised for a

pair of those old Claude-glasses, and in a month or so a pair turned up.

“You may imagine that, while I was waiting, time hung heavy on my hands. I longed to be at work; I wanted to realise the idea that had come to me while Rossetti was talking. During my acquaintance with him, I had been to his studio a dozen times, and had got to know and admire that type of woman’s beauty which is now connected with his name; the woman, I mean, with swanlike throat, languid air and heavy-lidded eyes, who conveys to all of us now something of Rossetti’s insatiable desire. But, while I was studying his work and going about steeped in the emotion of it, I noticed one day a lovely girl whom Rossetti could have taken as a model. I had begun, in fact, to see the world as Rossetti saw it; and this talk of his about the Claude-glasses put the idea into my head that I might, indeed, be able to make a pair of spectacles which would enable people to see the world as Rossetti saw it and as I saw it when Rossetti’s influence had entire possession of me. This would be a great deal easier to do, I said to myself, than to make a pair of Claude-glasses; for, after all, I did not know what Claude’s eyes were really like and I did know the peculiarity of Rossetti’s eyes. I accordingly began to study the dis-

parate quality in Rossetti's eyes and, after making a pair of spectacles that made my eyes see unequally to the same degree, I found that the Rossettian vision of things was sharpened and intensified to me. From that moment on, my task was easy. I had only to study any given pair of eyes and then to alter them so that they possessed the disparity of Rossetti's eyes and the work was half done. I found, too, that I could increase this disparity a little and, in proportion as I increased it, I increased also the peculiarity of what I called the Rossettian view of things; but, if I made the disparity too great, everything became blurred again.

“My researches had reached this point, when the pair of old Claude-glasses came into my hands. I saw at a glance that the optician of the eighteenth century had no knowledge of my work. He had contented himself, as Rossetti had guessed, with colouring the glasses very delicately and in several tints; in fact, he had studied the colour peculiarities of the eye as I had studied its form-peculiarities. With this hint, I completed my work. It took me only a few days to learn that Rossetti's view of colour was just as limited, or, I should say, just as peculiar, as his view of form; and, when I once understood the peculiarities of his colour-sight, I could reproduce them as easily as I could

reproduce the peculiarities of his vision of form. I then set to work to get both these peculiarities into half-a-dozen different sets of glasses.

“The work took me some six or eight months; and, when I had done my best, I sent a little note round to Rossetti and awaited his coming with painful eagerness, hope and fear swaying me in turn. When he came, I gave him a pair of the spectacles; and, when he put them on and looked out into the street, I watched him. He was surprised — that I could see — and more than a little puzzled. While he sat thinking, I explained to him what the old Claude-glasses were like and how I had developed his suggestion into this present discovery.

“‘You are an artist, my friend,’ he cried at last, ‘and a new kind of artist. If you can make people see the world as Claude saw it and as I see it, you can go on to make them see it as Rembrandt saw it and Velasquez. You can make the dullards understand life as the greatest have understood it. But that is impossible,’ he added, his face falling: ‘that is only a dream. You have got my real eyes, therefore you can force others to see as I see; but you have not the real eyes of Rembrandt, or Velasquez, or Titian; you have not the physical key to the souls of the great masters of the past; and so your work can only apply to the present and

to the future. But that is enough, and more than enough,' he added quickly. 'Go on: there are Whistler's eyes to get; and Corot's in France, and half-a-dozen others; and glad I shall be to put you on the scent. You will do wonderful things, my friend, wonderful things.'

"I was mightily uplifted by his praise and heart-glad, too, in my own way; but resolved at the same time not to give up the idea of making Velasquez-glasses and Rembrandt-glasses; for I had come to know and to admire these masters through Rossetti's talk. He was always referring to them, quoting them, so to say; and, for a long time past, I had accustomed myself to spend a couple of afternoons each week in our National Gallery, in order to get some knowledge of the men who were the companions of his spirit.

"For nearly a year after this, I spent every hour of my spare time studying in the National; and at last it seemed to me that I had got Titian's range of colour quite as exactly as the old glasses had got Claude's. But it was extraordinarily difficult to get his vision of form. However, I was determined to succeed; and, with infinite patience and after numberless attempts, success began slowly to come to me. To cut a long story short, I was able, in eight

or ten years, to construct these four or five different sorts of glasses. Claude-glasses and Rossetti-glasses, of course; and also Titian-glasses, Velasquez-glasses and Rembrandt-glasses; and again my mind came to anchor in the work accomplished. Not that I stopped thinking altogether; but that for some time my thoughts took no new flight, but hovered round and about the known. As soon as I had made the first pair of Rossetti-glasses, I began to teach my assistant, Williams, how to make them too, in order to put them before the public. We soon got a large sale for them. Chelsea, you know — old Chelsea, I mean — is almost peopled with artists, and many of them came about me and began to make my shop a rendezvous, where they met and brought their friends and talked; for Rossetti had a certain following, even in his own lifetime. But my real success came with the Titian-glasses. The great Venetian's romantic view of life and beauty seemed to exercise an irresistible seduction upon everyone, and the trade in his glasses soon became important.

“My home life at this time was not as happy as it had been. In those long years of endless experiment, my daughters had grown up and married, and my wife, I suppose, widowed of her children, wanted more of my time and atten-

tion, just when I was taken away by my new work and began to give her less. She used to complain at first; but, when she saw that complaints did not alter me, she retired into herself, as it were; and I saw less and less of her. And then, when my work was done and my new trade established, my shop, as I have told you, became the rendezvous for artists, and I grew interested in the frank, bright faces and the youthful, eager voices, and renewed my youth in the company of the young painters and writers who used to seek me out. Suddenly, I awoke to the fact that my wife was ill, very ill, and, almost before I had fully realised how weak she was, she died. The loss was greater than I would have believed possible. She was gentle and kind, and I missed her every day and every hour. I think that was the beginning of my dislike for the shop, the shop that had made me neglect her. The associations of it reminded me of my fault; the daily requirements of it grew irksome to me.

“About this time, too, I began to miss Rossetti and the vivifying influences of his mind and talk. He went into the country a great deal and for long periods I did not see him, and, when at length we met, I found that the virtue was going out of him: he had become moody and irritable, a neuropath. Of course, the

intellectual richness in him could not be hidden altogether: now and then, he would break out and talk in the old magical way:

And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
Till mean things put on beauty like a dress
And all the world was an enchanted place.

But, more often, he was gloomy and harassed, and it saddened and oppressed me to meet him. The young artists who came to my shop did not fill his place; they chattered gaily enough, but none of them was a magician as he had been, and I began to realise that genius such as his is one of the rarest gifts in the world.

"I am trying, with all brevity, to explain to you the causes of my melancholy and my dissatisfaction: but I don't think I have done it very convincingly; and yet, about this time, I had grown dissatisfied, ill at ease, restless. And once again my heart-emptiness drove me to work and think. The next step forward came inevitably from the last one I had taken.

"While studying the great painters, I had begun to notice that there was a certain quality common to all of them, a certain power they all possessed when working at highest pressure: the power of seeing things as they are — the vital and essential truth of things. I don't mean to say that all of them possessed this faculty to the same degree. Far from it. The

truth of things to Titian is overlaid with romance: he is memorable mainly for his magic of colour and beauty; while Holbein is just as memorable for his grasp of reality. But compare Titian with Giorgione or Tintoretto, and you will see that his apprehension of the reality of things is much greater than theirs. It is that which distinguishes him from the other great colourists of Venice. And, as my own view of life grew sadder and clearer, it came to me gradually as a purpose that I should try to make glasses that would show the reality, the essential truth of things, as all the great masters had seen it; and so I set to work again on a new quest.

“About this time, I found out that, though I had many more customers in my shop, I had not made money out of my artistic enterprises. My old trade as a spectacle-maker was really the most profitable branch of my business. The sale of the Rossetti-glasses and the Titian-glasses, which at first had been very great, fell off quickly as the novelty passed away, and it was soon apparent that I had lost more than I had gained by my artistic inventions. But whether I made £1,500 a year, or £1,000 a year, was a matter of indifference to me. I had doubled that cape of forty which to me marks the end of youth in a man, and my

desires were shrinking as my years increased. As long as I had enough to satisfy my wants, I was not greedy of money.

“This new-born desire of mine to make glasses which would show the vital truth of things soon began to possess me; and, gradually, I left the shop to take care of itself, left it in the hands of my assistant, Williams, and spent more and more time in the little workshop at the back, which had been the theatre of all my achievements. I could not tell you how long I worked at the problem; I only know that it cost me years and years, and that, as I gave more time and labour to it and more and more of the passion of my soul, so I came to love it more intensely and to think less of the ordinary business of life. At length, I began to live in a sort of dream, possessed by the one purpose. I used to get up at night and go on with the work and rest in the day. For months together, I scarcely ate anything, in the hope that hunger might sharpen my faculties; at another time, I lived almost wholly on coffee, hoping that this would have the same effect; and, at length, bit by bit, and slowly, I got nearer to the goal of my desire. But, when I reached it, when I had constructed glasses that would reveal the naked truth, show things as they are and men and women as

they are, I found that circumstances about me had changed lamentably.

“In the midst of my work, I had known without realising it that Williams had left me and started a shop opposite, with the object of selling the artistic glasses, of which he declared himself the inventor; but I paid no attention to this at the time, and when, two or three years afterwards, I woke again to the ordinary facts of life, I found that my business had almost deserted me. I am not sure, but I think it was a notice to pay some debt which I hadn’t the money to pay, that first recalled me completely to the realities of everyday life. What irony there is in the world! Here was I, who had been labouring for years and years with the one object of making men see things as they are and men and women as they are, persecuted now and undone by the same reality which I was trying to reveal.

“My latest invention, too, was a commercial failure: the new glasses did not sell at all. Nine people out of ten in England are truth-blind, and could make nothing of the glasses; and the small minority, who have the sense of real things, kept complaining that the view of life which my glasses showed them, was not pleasant: as if that were any fault of mine.

Williams, too, my former assistant, did me a great deal of harm. He devoted himself merely to selling my spectacles; and the tradesman succeeded where the artist and thinker starved. As soon as he found out what my new glasses were, he began to treat me contemptuously; talked of me at times as a sort of half-madman, whose brain was turned by the importance given to his inventions, and at other times declared that I had never invented anything at all, for the idea of the artistic glasses had been suggested by Rossetti. The young painters who frequented his shop took pleasure in spreading this legend and attributing to Rossetti what Rossetti would have been the first to disclaim. I found myself abandoned, and hours used to pass without anyone coming into my shop. The worst of it was that, when chance gave me a customer, I soon lost him: the new glasses pleased no one.

“At this point, I suppose, if I had been gifted with ordinary prudence, I should have begun to retrace my steps; but either we grow more obstinate as we grow older, or else the soul’s passion grows by the sacrifices we make for it. Whatever the motives of my obstinacy may have been, the disappointment, the humiliation I went through seemed only to nerve me to a higher resolution. I knew I had done good

work, and the disdain shown to me drove me in upon myself and my own thoughts.”

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So much I learned from Mr. Penry in the first few days of our acquaintance, and then for weeks and weeks he did not tell me any more. He seemed to regard the rest of his story as too fantastic and improbable for belief, and he was nervously apprehensive lest he should turn me against him by telling it. Again and again, however, he hinted at further knowledge, more difficult experiments, a more arduous seeking, till my curiosity was all aflame, and I pressed him, perhaps unduly, for the whole truth.

In those weeks of constant companionship, our friendship had grown with almost every meeting. It was impossible to escape the charm of Penry's personality! He was so absorbed in his work, so heedless of the ordinary vanities and greeds of men, so simple and kindly and sympathetic, that I grew to love him. He had his little faults, of course, his little peculiarities; surface irritabilities of temper; moments of undue depression, in which he depreciated himself and his work; moments of undue elation, in which he over-estimated the importance of what he had done. He would

have struck most people as a little flighty and uncertain, I think; but his passionate devotion to his work lifted the soul and his faults were, after all, insignificant in comparison with his noble and rare qualities. I had met no one in life who aroused the higher impulses in me as he did. It seemed probable that his latest experiments would be the most daring and the most instructive, and, accordingly, I pressed him to tell me about them with some insistence, and, after a time, he consented:

“I don’t know how it came about,” he began, “but the contempt of men for my researches exercised a certain influence on me, and at length I took myself seriously to task: was there any reason for their disdain and dislike? Did these glasses of mine really show things as they are, or was I offering but a new caricature of truth, which people were justified in rejecting as unpleasant? I took up again my books on optics and studied the whole subject anew from the beginning. Even as I worked, a fear grew upon me: I felt that there was another height before me to climb, and that the last bit of road would probably be the steepest of all. . . . In the Gospels,” he went on, in a low, reverent voice, “many things are symbolic and of universal application, and it always seemed to me significant that the Hill

of Calvary came at the end of the long journey. I shrank from another prolonged effort; I said to myself I couldn't face another task like the last. But, all the while, I had a sort of uncomfortable prescience that the hardest part of my life's work lay before me.

"One day, a casual statement stirred me profoundly. The primary colours, you know, are red, yellow and blue. The colours shown in the rainbow vary from red to blue and violet; and the vibrations, or lengths, of the light-waves that give us violet grow shorter and shorter and, at length, give us red. These vibrations can be measured. One day, quite by chance, I came across the statement that there were innumerable light-waves longer than those which give violet. At once the question sprang: were these longer waves represented by colours which we don't see, colours for which we have no name, colours of which we can form no conception? And was the same thing true of the waves which, growing shorter and shorter, give us the sensation of red? There is room, of course, for myriads of colours beyond this other extremity of our vision. A little study convinced me that my guess was right; for all the colours which we see are represented to our sense of feeling in degrees of heat: that is, blue shows

one reading on the thermometer and red a higher reading; and, by means of this new standard, I discovered that man's range of vision is not even placed in the middle of the register of heat, but occupies a little space far up towards the warmer extremity of it. There are thousands of degrees of cold lower than blue and hundreds of degrees of heat above red. All these gradations are doubtless represented by colours which no human eye can perceive, no human mind imagine. It is with sight as with hearing. There are noises louder than thunder which we cannot hear, the roar that lies on the other side of silence. We men are poor restless prisoners, hemmed in by our senses as by the walls of a cell, hearing only a part of nature's orchestra and that part imperfectly; seeing only a thousandth part of the colour marvels about us and seeing that infinitesimal part incorrectly and partially. Here was new knowledge with a vengeance! Knowledge that altered all my work! How was I to make glasses to show all this? Glasses that would reveal things as they are and must be to higher beings—the ultimate reality. At once, the new quest became the object of my life, and, somehow or other I knew before I began the work that the little scraps of comfort or of happiness which I had preserved up

to this time, I should now forfeit. I realised with shrinking and fear, that ~~this~~ new enquiry would still further remove me from the sympathy of my fellows.

“My prevision was justified. I had hardly got well to work — that is, I had only spent a couple of years in vain and torturing experiments — when I was one day arrested for debt. I had paid no attention to the writ; the day of trial came and went without my knowing anything about it; and there was a man in possession of my few belongings before I understood what was going on. Then I was taught by experience that to owe money is the one unforgivable sin in the nation of shopkeepers. My goods were sold up and I was brought to utter destitution” — the old man paused — “and then sent to prison because I could not pay.”

“But,” I asked, “did your daughters do nothing? Surely, they could have come to your help!”

“Oh! they were more than kind,” he replied simply, “the eldest especially, perhaps because she was childless herself. I called her Gabrielle,” he added, lingering over the name; “she was very good to me. As soon as she heard the news, she paid my debt and set me free. She bought things, too, and fitted out

two nice rooms for me and arranged everything again quite comfortably; but you see," he went on with a timid, deprecating smile, "I tired out even her patience: I could not work at anything that brought in money and I was continually spending money for my researches. The nice furniture went first; the pretty tables and chairs and then the bed. I should have wearied an angel. Again and again Gabrielle bought me furniture and made me tidy and comfortable, as she said, and again and again, like a spendthrift boy, I threw it all away. How could I think of tables and chairs, when I was giving my life to my work? Besides, I always felt that the more I was plagued and punished, the more certain I was to get out the best in me: solitude and want are the twin nurses of the soul."

"But didn't you wish to get any recognition, any praise?" I broke in.

"I knew by this time," he answered, "that, in proportion as my work was excellent, I should find fewer to understand it. How many had I seen come to praise and honour while Rossetti fell to nerve-disease and madness; and yet his work endures and will endure, while theirs is already forgotten. The tree that grows to a great height wins to solitude even in a forest: its highest outshoots find no com-

panions save the winds and stars. I tried to console myself with such similes as this," he went on, with a deprecatory smile, "for the years passed and I seemed to come no nearer to success. At last, the way opened for me a little, and, after eight or ten years of incessant experiment, I found that partial success was all I should ever accomplish. Listen! There is not one pair of eyes in a million that could ever see what I had taught myself to see, for the passion of the soul brings with it its own reward. After caring for nothing but truth for twenty years, thinking of nothing but truth, and wearying after it, I could see it more clearly than other men: get closer to it than they could. So the best part of my labour—I mean the highest result of it—became personal, entirely personal, and this disappointed me. If I could do no good to others by it, what was my labour but a selfish gratification? And what was that to me—at my age! I seemed to lose heart, to lose zest. . . . Perhaps it was that old age had come upon me, that the original sum of energy in me had been spent, that my bolt was shot. It may be so.

"The fact remains that I lost the desire to go on, and, when I had lost that, I woke up, of course, to the ordinary facts of life once again.

I had no money; I was weak from semi-starvation and long vigils, prematurely old and decrepit. Once more, Gabrielle came to my assistance. She fitted up this room, and then I went out to sell my glasses, as a pedlar. I bought the tray and made specimens of all the spectacles I had made, and hawked them about the streets. Why shouldn't I? No work is degrading to the spirit, none, and I could not be a burden to the one I loved, now I knew that my best efforts would not benefit others. I did not get along well: the world seemed strange to me, and men a little rough and hard. Besides, the police seemed to hate me; I don't know why. Perhaps, because I was poor, and yet unlike the poor they knew. They persecuted me, and the magistrates before whom they brought me always believed them and never believed me. I have been punished times without number for obstruction, though I never annoyed anyone. The police never pretended that I had cheated or stolen from anyone before; but, after all, this latest charge of theirs brought me to know you and gave me your friendship; and so I feel that all the shame has been more than made up to me."

My heart burned within me as he spoke so gently of his unmerited sufferings. I told him I was proud of being able to help him. He

put his hand on mine with a little smile of comprehension.

A day or two later curiosity awoke in me again, and I asked him to let me see a pair of the new glasses, those that show the ultimate truth of things.

"Perhaps, some day," he answered quietly. I suppose my face fell, for, after a while, he went on meditatively: "There are faults in them, you see, shortcomings and faults in you, too, my friend. Believe me, if I were sure that they would cheer or help you in life, I would let you use them quickly enough; but I am beginning to doubt their efficacy. Perhaps the truth of things is not for man."

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When we entered the court on the day of Penry's trial, Morris and myself were of opinion that the case would not last long and that it would certainly be decided in our favour. The only person who seemed at all doubtful of the issue was Penry himself. He smiled at me, half pityingly, when I told him that in an hour we should be on our way home. The waiting seemed interminable, but at length the case was called. The counsel for the prosecution got up and talked perfunctorily for five minutes, with a sort of careless unconcern that

seemed to me callous and unfeeling. Then he began to call his witnesses. The workman, I noticed, was not in the court. His evidence had been rather in favour of the accused, and the prosecution, on that account, left it out. But Mr. 'Allett, as he called himself, of 'igh 'Olborn, was even more voluble and vindictive than he had been at the police-court. He had had time to strengthen his evidence, too, to make it more bitter and more telling, and he had used his leisure malignantly. It seemed to me that everyone should have seen his spite and understood the vileness of his motives. But no; again and again, the judge emphasised those parts of his story which seemed to tell most against the accused. The judge was evidently determined that the jury should not miss any detail of the accusation, and his bias appeared to me iniquitous. But there was a worse surprise in store for us. After Hallett, the prosecution called a canon of Westminster, a stout man, with heavy jowl and loose, suasive lips, Canon Bayton. He told us how he had grown interested in Penry and in his work, and how he had bought all his earlier glasses, the Rossetti-glasses, as he called them. The canon declared that these artistic glasses threw a very valuable light on things, redeemed the coarseness and commonness of life and made

reality beautiful and charming. He was not afraid to say that he regarded them as instruments for good; but the truth-revealing glasses seemed to excite his utmost hatred and indignation. He could not find a good word to say for them: they only showed, he said, what was terrible and brutal in life. When looking through them, all beauty vanished, the charming flesh-covering fell away and you saw the death's-head grinning at you. Instead of parental affection, you found personal vanity; instead of the tenderness of the husband for the wife, gross and common sensuality. All high motives withered, and, instead of the flowers of life, you were compelled to look at the wormlike roots and the clinging dirt. He concluded his evidence by assuring the jury that they would be doing a good thing if they put an end to the sale of such glasses. The commerce was worse than fraudulent, he declared; it was a blasphemy against God and an outrage on human nature. The unctuous canon seemed to me worse than all the rest; but the effect he had on the jury was unmistakable, and our barrister, Symonds, refused to cross-examine him. To do so, he said, would only strengthen the case for the prosecution, and I have no doubt that he was right, for Morris agreed with him.

But even the prosecuting witnesses did not hurt us more than the witnesses for the defence. Mr. Penry had been advised by Mr. Morris to call witnesses to his character, and he had called half-a-dozen of the most respectable tradesmen of his acquaintance. One and all did him harm rather than good; they all spoke of having known him twenty years before, when he was well-to-do and respectable. They laid stress upon what they called his "fall in life." They all seemed to think that he had neglected his business and come to ruin by his own fault. No one of them had the faintest understanding of the man, or of his work. It was manifest from the beginning that these witnesses damaged our case, and this was apparently the view of the prosecuting barrister, for he scarcely took the trouble to cross-examine them.

It was with a sigh of relief that I saw Mr. Penry go into the box to give evidence on his own behalf. Now, I thought, the truth will come to light. He stated everything with the utmost clearness and precision; but no one seemed to believe him. The wish to understand him was manifestly wanting in the jury, and from the beginning the judge took sides against him. From time to time, he interrupted him just to bring out what he regarded as the manifest falseness of his testimony.

"You say that these glasses show truth," he said. "Who wants to see truth?"

"Very few," was Penry's reply.

"Why, then, did you make the glasses," went on the judge, "if you knew that they would disappoint people?"

"I thought it my duty to," replied Penry.

"Your duty to disappoint and anger people?" retorted the judge; "a strange view to take of duty. And you got money for this unpleasant duty, didn't you?"

"A little," was Penry's reply.

"Yes; but still you got money," persisted the judge. "You persuaded people to buy your glasses, knowing that they would be disappointed in them, and you induced them to give you money for the disappointment. Have you anything else to urge in your defence?"

I was at my wit's end; I scarcely knew how to keep quiet in my seat. It seemed to me so easy to see the truth. But even Penry appeared indifferent to the result, indifferent to a degree that I could scarcely explain or excuse. This last question, however, of the judge aroused him. As the harsh, contemptuous words fell upon the ear, he leaned forward, and, selecting a pair of spectacles, put them on and peered round the court. I noticed that he was slightly

flushed. In a moment or two, he took the glasses off and turned to the judge:

"My lord," he said, "you seem determined to condemn me, but, if you do condemn me, I want you to do it with some understanding of the facts. I have told you that there are very few persons in this country who have any faculty for truth, and that the few who have, usually have ruined their power before they reach manhood. You scoff and sneer at what I say, but still it remains the simple truth. I looked round the court just now to see if there was anyone here young enough, ingenuous enough, honest enough, to give evidence on my behalf. I find that there is no one in the court to whom I can appeal with any hope of success. But, my lord, in the room behind this court there is a child sitting, a girl with fair hair, probably your lordship's daughter. Allow me to call her as a witness, allow her to test the glasses and say what she sees through them, and then you will find that these glasses do alter and change things in a surprising way to those who can use them."

"I don't know how you knew it," broke in the judge, "but my daughter is in my room waiting for me, and what you say seems to have some sense in it. But it is quite unusual to call a child, and I don't know that I have

any right to allow it. Still, I don't want you to feel that you have not had every opportunity of clearing yourself; therefore, if the jury consent, I am quite willing that they should hear what this new witness may have to say."

"We are willing to hear the witness," said the foreman, "but really, your lordship, our minds are made up about the case."

The next moment, the child came into the court — a girl of thirteen or fourteen, with a bright, intelligent face, a sort of shy fear troubling the directness of her approach.

"I want you to look through a pair of spectacles, my child," said Penry to her, "and tell us just what you see through them," and, as he spoke, he peered at her in his strange way, as if judging her eyes.

He then selected a pair of glasses and handed them to her. The child put them on and looked round the court, and then cried out suddenly:

"Oh, what strange people; and how ugly they all are. All ugly, except you who gave me the glasses; you are beautiful." Turning hastily round, she looked at her father and added, "Oh, papa, you are — Oh!" and she took off the glasses quickly, while a burning flush spread over her face.

"I don't like those glasses," she said indignantly, laying them down. "They are horrid! My father doesn't look like that."

"My child," said Penry, very gently, "will you look through another pair of glasses? You see so much that perhaps you can see what is to be, as well as what is. Perhaps you can catch some glimpse even of the future."

He selected another pair and handed them to the child. There was a hush of expectancy in the court; people who had scoffed at Penry before and smiled contempt, now leaned forward to hear, as if something extraordinary were about to happen. All eyes were riveted on the little girl's face; all ears strained to hear what she would say. Round and round the court she looked through the strange glasses and then began to speak in a sort of frightened monotone:

"I see nothing," she said. "I mean there is no court and no people, only great white blocks, a sort of bluey-white powdered as with sugar. Is it ice? There are no trees, no animals; all is cold and white. It is ice. There is no living creature, no grass, no flowers, nothing moves. It is all cold, all dead." In a frightened voice she added: "Is that the future of the world?"

Penry leaned towards her eagerly:

“Look at the light, child,” he said; “follow the light up and tell us what you see.”

Again a strange hush; I heard my heart thumping while the child looked about her. Then, pulling off the glasses, she said peevishly:

“I can’t see anything more: the light hurts my eyes.”

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DEATH IN PRISON

“Matthew Penry, whose trial for fraud and condemnation will probably still be remembered by our readers because of the very impressive evidence for the prosecution given by Canon Bayton, of Westminster, died, we understand, in Wandsworth Prison yesterday morning from syncope.” — Extract from the *Times*, January 3rd, 1900.

